

# Different Sights

## Immigrants in New England



A thematic history of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds on the New England Tableland.

Janis Wilton

2009





# **Different Sights: Immigrants in New England**

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FRONT COVER: (clockwise from top left) Kwong Sing Store, Glen Innes; Hanna's Arcade, Armidale; Sing Wah Restaurant, Tenterfield; Tenterfield Saddler (established by Charles Pavel).

## PREFACE

*Different Sights* provides an introduction to the rich and diverse history of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds on the New England Tableland. It shares stories about the work which brought individuals and families to the region, where and how they settled, and the lives they created for themselves. It offers insights into how they were received and how they, in turn, perceived their new social, cultural and geographical environments. It identifies some of the themes and patterns which emerge from their histories, invites visits to the sites and places of their experiences, and presents objects and items that convey aspects of their stories. It is complemented by an online database where you can seek more detail on specific sites, places, objects and people, and where you can also offer to add your stories.

Visit and browse the online database at:

<http://hfrc.une.edu.au/heritagefutures/neimmigrants>



# CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Defining New England	
Traditional owners	
Migrants	
Themes	
<b>Sheep and Cattle</b>	<b>6</b>
Chinese indentured labourers	
German farm labourers and shepherds	
Italian POWs, a Danish farm labourer and a Japanese feedlot	
<b>Gems and Minerals</b>	<b>22</b>
Gold	
Tin	
Entrepreneurs	
<b>Grain, Vegetables, Tobacco and Grapes</b>	<b>32</b>
Free Selectors	
Market gardeners	
Tobacco farmers	
Wine growers	
Alternative farming	
<b>Making and Selling</b>	<b>52</b>
German tradesmen and proprietors	
Chinese storekeepers	
Lebanese hawkers, haberdashers and barbers	
Greek cafes, cinemas, hotels and fruit shops	
Chinese restaurants	
A French café, a Dutch carpenter and a Czech photographer	
<b>Body, Soul and Mind</b>	<b>81</b>
Doctors, herbalists and an Indian oculist	
An Italian bishop, temples, and a mosque	
Schools, Italian classes and a German Vice Chancellor	
<b>Community, Creativity and Heritage</b>	<b>101</b>
A German club, a state parliamentarian and football	
A Chinese band, a Polish poet and Japanese potters	
Family stories, ethnic community histories and local museums	
<b>Ending and Beginnings</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>120</b>





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The research informing this study has particularly benefitted from the work done by Graham Wilson specifically for this project and for his willingness to draw on over thirty years' research in the region. Thanks also to Ken Halliday, Eve Chappell and the team at the Land of the Beardies History House, Ann Hodgins and the members of the Inverell District Family History Group, Daphne Struck at Tenterfield Centenary Cottage Museum, Ron Pickering and the volunteers at Wing Hing Long Store and Museum in Tingha, and Bill Oates at the University of New England Heritage Centre and Regional Archives. All gave generously of their time and knowledge.

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## INTRODUCTION

If you walk along the main street of Tenterfield in northern New South Wales, look above the awnings that shade the footpaths and read the surviving signage, you will see 'Kneipp. Established 1892. Saddle and Harness Emporium' and 'Paragon Buildings'. And, at street level, 'Sing Wah Restaurant' and 'Uncle Tom's Chinese Cuisine'. An hour south along the New England Highway is Glen Innes. There on the main street you will see 'Kwong Sing and Co', 'Dragon Court Restaurant', 'A Meyer's Bakery', 'Paragon Café', 'Schmidt Jewellers', 'Shen Yen Restaurant' and 'Yim Thai Restaurant'. In the town's local museum, the Land of the Beardies History House, you will see a display about German-born local entrepreneur, Johnathan Utz and tools used by Chinese carpenters who worked at the Kwong Sing store. In Uralla, further south along the New England Highway, on a visit to McCrossins Mill Museum you will encounter a re-creation of a Chinese temple. To the west of the Highway, at Tingha in the Wing Hing Long Store you can experience a Chinese-Australian owned general store from the early to mid twentieth century, and in the Emmaville Mining Museum you can view – and sometimes handle – samples of the minerals and gems whose discovery brought bursts of people from many different cultural backgrounds to the area.

These are a few of the tangible reminders of the presence of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds on the New England Tableland in northern New South Wales. They are, however, reminders that are often overlooked in the marketing of each locality's heritage sites and items. For this marketing and, at least until recently, within local histories themselves, the main focus has tended to be on settlers – mainly male – from English or Scottish backgrounds who have played their part as pioneers who explored and tamed the land, established settlements, built business enterprises, contributed to civic life or gained notoriety of some form on a national stage. The heritage sites most often promoted are public and stately buildings dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>1</sup>

*Different Sights* aims to texture these public representations of heritage and to enrich the history of the New England Tableland with the histories of immigrants who come from different backgrounds and whose experiences offer different perspectives on aspects of the region's history. To do this,

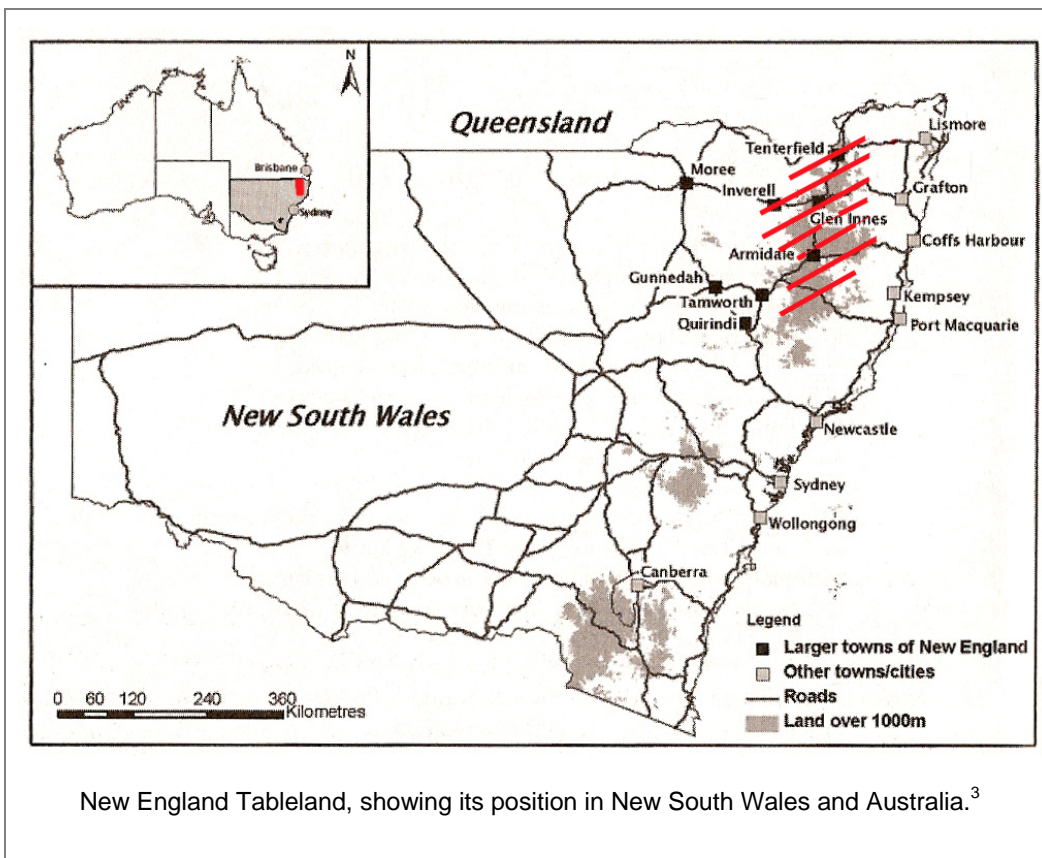
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<sup>1</sup> Browsing current local council tourist websites and brochures provides examples. See also Heather Burke, *Meaning and Ideology in Historical Archaeology*, New York, 1999, pp. 200-209, who analyses the Armidale Heritage Walk and reaches similar conclusions.

*Different Sights* steps back from the emphases created through heritage tourism, looks beyond the recognised and advertised heritage sites, calls on the assistance and stories of local residents and families, and uses the modern historian's recognition of the rich range of sources for piecing together the past. In the process, different sites gain significance, silences are penetrated, new stories surface, familiar themes lose their certainties.

## Defining New England

Over the almost two hundred years of European occupation of the region, the name has been applied to differently defined geographical, political and administrative areas and imaginings.<sup>2</sup> Throughout, the central core has remained the New England Tableland and it is this geographical area which is the primary focus of this study. This area encompasses the towns of Walcha and Uralla to the south, goes up the New England Highway through Guyra and Glen Innes to Tenterfield, and west to Inverell.



<sup>2</sup> Alan Atkinson, 'What is New England?' in *High Lean Country*, Alan Atkinson et.al. (eds), Sydney, 2006, pp.10-20.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Atkinson et.al.(eds), *High Lean Country*, Sydney, 2006, p.xiv.

## Traditional owners

The traditional owners of the New England Tableland are the Aniwan, Dunghutti, Gamilaraay, Gumbayngir and Ngarabul people. Their long attachment to this country is evident in the oral traditions within Aboriginal families, surviving rock art and the documentation created by sensitive archaeological digs.<sup>4</sup> The attempts to displace them echo in the stories of frontier violence, their marginalisation in employment and education opportunities, and their forced segregation.<sup>5</sup> Their survival and resilience is evident in the organizations, networks, art, oral traditions and community practices and beliefs that shape and support their communities into the twenty-first century.<sup>6</sup> Their stories, ownership and presence sit at the core of the history of European occupation of the region. In this study their presence is a backdrop against which the performances of other actors take place and attracts comment only when it provides an insight into the experiences, misunderstandings and relations of immigrant settlers.

## Immigrants

With the possible exception of some absconding convicts, the first non-Aboriginal people to push into the region were 'explorers' in the early part of the nineteenth century. They were followed by a small but growing number of squatters eager to claim land for the expansion of their pastoral industry. In their wake came a labour force to work the land, the families of squatters and owners, government officials, tradesmen, and commercial enterprises. Towns began to form.

In the 1850s, the first of the mining rushes hit the region. Gold and later tin and other minerals and gemstones became an industry which, throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, brought more new arrivals and saw the growth (and sometimes demise) of villages and towns. Changes also came with the introduction of free selection from the 1860s enabling the creation of farms and the boosting of a number of agricultural enterprises.

As the pastoral, mining and agricultural opportunities in the region expanded during the nineteenth century, so too did the service industries bringing with them opportunities for residents and new arrivals as, for example, brewers, clergymen, doctors, hawkers, hoteliers, millers, retailers, saddlers, tanners,

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<sup>4</sup> For example: Rodney Harrison, *Shared Landscapes*, Sydney, 2004; June Ross, 'Seeing red: musings on rock art' in *High Lean Country*, pp. 81-87; and Wendy Beck, 'Aboriginal archaeology' in *High Lean Country*, pp. 88-97.

<sup>5</sup> David Roberts, 'The frontier' in *High Lean Country*, pp.98-110.

<sup>6</sup> For example: Bill Cohen, *To My Delight*, Canberra, 1987; Patsy Cohen and Margaret Somerville, *Ingelba and the Five Black Matriarchs*, Sydney, 1990.

and teachers. These immigrants came to a region that, until the railway edged its way across the landscape in the late nineteenth century, was distant and relatively isolated.

The coming of the railway, both symbolically and in reality, marks the opening of the region and the ways in which changes in national and international economic and political contexts increasingly impacted on the shape of life, industry and the opportunities available in New England. The twentieth century saw the end of many local colonial enterprises as competition and technological developments elsewhere manufactured cheaper goods that could be brought by rail and as national and international capitalist enterprises expanded their markets. Increasingly, and certainly dominating the commercial landscape by the late twentieth century, were big and small chain stores and franchises. Fluctuations in prices for the pastoral and agricultural industries and growing mechanisation also meant dramatic changes to the management, ownership, size, labour force and productivity of stations and farms. Mining enterprises also largely faltered.

These changes in economic infrastructure and employment opportunities undermined population growth, and the undermining was deepened by the nation-wide increase in urbanisation. Opportunities, especially for the young, were seen to be in the metropolitan centres. The overall drop in population on the New England Tableland, however, did not mean the cessation of the arrival of new settlers including newly arrived migrants from overseas. New enterprises brought newcomers. The education industry of Armidale provides one example. The growth (and later cessation) of tobacco farming provides another. As well, periodic attempts were made by government to encourage new settlers to rural regions. There were the soldier settlement schemes and there have been various programs and incentives to send refugees and other immigrants to regional centres.

It is within these broader patterns of migration and settlement that this study identifies key themes and then explores them from the perspectives of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

### **Themes**

The themes that emerge begin with pastoralism, mining, farming and the various commercial enterprises and trades that developed as service and consumer industries. These themes then diversify and multiply: healthcare, religion, education, social and cultural life, creative endeavour, and heritage.

The concern here is to tease out how these themes are documented and can be interpreted and presented through sites, objects and stories. The particular emphasis is on examples relating to immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds because, in the grander narratives and heritage representations about the region, their presence is not large and has usually attracted only passing mention. As well, the perspectives and experiences offered by the histories of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds open different vistas on the history and nature of the region, the people who visited and those who settled, the links they have with each other and with people elsewhere, and on the experiences of immigrants more broadly. There is also an emphasis on the ways in which local and family history societies and museums and their respective councils have recorded and told these stories of immigration and settlement. It is, after all, their attachment to their place and its history and heritage that provides most hope of securing the future of sites, objects and stories.

## SHEEP AND CATTLE

The European presence in New England was pushed forward by the desire to seek new pasturelands and settlement possibilities beyond the 'limits of location'. Explorers John Oxley (in 1818) and Allan Cunningham (in 1827 and 1828) found routes into parts of the region and, in 1832, Hamilton Collins Sempill was the first to drive stock into the area. He took up land at what is now Walcha. Sempill was soon followed by an increasing number of intending pastoralists or their agents, some based in the Hunter Valley and others arriving from England or Scotland and, following networks and introductions, staking claims to large expanses of New England acreage. Within fifteen years most of the viable land was occupied or at least marked out in the names of particular squatters. The claims were based primarily on occupancy with no security of tenure until after 1847 when fourteen year leases became available. At that time, 122 runs were identified by the squatters themselves. By 1865, following the resolution of many boundary disputes and the subdivision of some of the runs, there were 165 pastoral leases.<sup>1</sup>

The stories of this European occupation of Dunghutti, Aniwan, Gumbayngir, Gamilaraay and Ngarabul country have been told in many histories.<sup>2</sup> These tend to trace the journeys of individual squatters from their homes in England and Scotland, through settlements often in the Hunter Valley and on up to the tough conditions of early pioneer pastoralism in the New England district. The emphasis is largely on the evolution of pastoral properties from slab hut dwellings with a small male workforce, basic facilities and modest numbers of sheep to thriving enterprises which construct homesteads of increasing grandeur and comfort, provide employment for growing networks of families and labourers, and produce wool clips that become a staple of the region's economy. As well, the owners and managers become key figures in local, regional and sometimes colonial political, social and economic life. The histories also tend to follow the pastoral families and their properties through the impact of the 1860s free selection legislation, the 1890s depression, and the changing circumstances as generations died out, properties were subdivided and the twentieth century brought a new range of challenges in an economic, social and political environment which had changed dramatically by the end of the century. In these histories, the presence of migrants from non-

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<sup>1</sup> R.B. Walker, *Old New England*, Sydney, 1966, p.42.

<sup>2</sup> For example: J.R.Black, *B Over Wallangra*, Inverell, 1988; Anne Harris, *Abington*, Armidale, 1982; Jillian Oppenheimer and Bruce Mitchell, *An Australian Clan*, Sydney, 1989; Walker, *Old New England*; Owen Wright, *Wongiwibinda*, Armidale, 1985.





Villages, towns and pastoral stations on the New England Tableland in the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

3 Walker, *Old New England*, frontispiece.

English-speaking backgrounds is often mentioned but rarely dealt with in detail.

As early as 1852, John Everett of Ollera station reported 'we have blacks and Chinese shepherding and must depend on the blacks to reap the wheat'.<sup>4</sup> Everett's comment signifies that there was a shortage of European labour and intimates that, by employing 'blacks' and 'Chinese', the station was employing those from the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. It is this pattern that continues throughout the first few decades of the pastoral industry. Immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds worked alongside Aboriginal stockmen and labourers to provide a needed labour force. A focus on their presence and contributions highlights particular aspects of the pastoral industry in the region during the nineteenth century. In particular, it focuses on the strategies used to acquire the labour needed to work the pastoral properties, the nature of the labour relations involved, the social and economic hierarchies and networks in the industry, and the links which moved people across the world and through the region. The roles of Chinese and German pastoral workers provide good examples.

### **Chinese indentured labourers**

The first Chinese were brought to New England in the late 1840s. They were recruited in China and contracted to work, usually for a five year period, as labourers on pastoral properties. Over 3,043 Chinese men came to New South Wales between 1848 and 1853 under this scheme, and by 1856 there were 155 Chinese in New England. These 155 represented 2.8% of the total population of 5,508, 17.88% of the 867 shepherds in the region and they were employed on 51 of the 132 squatting runs in the region.<sup>5</sup>

Maxine Darnell<sup>6</sup> emphasises that the importation of these indentured labourers was a part of an international capitalist enterprise and network. It was argued for at the colonial level by those with vested interests in acquiring a labour force for a growing pastoral industry which, with the end of the convict system and with the belief that a British labour force was not suited or willing to do the type of work required, was facing a shortage of labourers. The scheme was implemented through a network of contacts which stretched

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<sup>4</sup> Walker, *Old New England*, p.54. See also Margaret Rodwell, *Ollera and its people*, PhD, Armidale, 2006, especially p.230.

<sup>5</sup> Maxine Darnell, *The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853*, PhD, Armidale, 1997, Tables 8a and 8b.

<sup>6</sup> Darnell, *The Chinese labour trade*.

through Sydney to Amoy (Xiamen)<sup>7</sup> in China and back to the well-connected owners of pastoral properties. The trade in indentured Chinese labour was indicative of the power of the squattocracy at this period.

The Chinese tended to be taken on by the larger pastoral properties, in groups of around ten and employed particularly as shepherds and hut-keepers. They were usually sent out in pairs. As shepherds, they were in charge of a flock of sheep ranging from 400 to 500 ewes or 600 to 1000 dry sheep. Their duties entailed taking the sheep out to graze during the day, guarding them with the assistance of dogs and bringing them back at night where a hutkeeper took over. They could also be required to wash the sheep before shearing, look after them during lambing, clip the lambs' tails to prevent fly-strike, and castrate any male lambs.<sup>8</sup> They received a wage, rations of food and clothing, accommodation and were given an advance before emigration which had to be paid back from their wages.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, their wages were lower and their employment situations more controlled than their European counterparts.<sup>10</sup>

Conditions varied from property to property.<sup>11</sup> Some Chinese absconded and appeared before the courts complaining of poor treatment; others completed their contracts; some stayed beyond their contracts and continued to work on the properties for some time. A small number settled in the region; most moved on with the majority probably returning to China.

The presence of these early indentured Chinese labourers is primarily remembered through the work by Maxine Darnell<sup>12</sup>, the survival of contracts, the debates for and against their importation recorded in parliamentary proceedings and newspaper reports, discussions and negotiations about their suitability in personal and station records, station store ledgers recording rations and payments, occasional grave markers, and the stories and items uncovered as descendants have sought to learn about their Chinese ancestry.

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<sup>7</sup> Throughout this study, Chinese place and other proper names are given in the anglicized form in which they were used at the time. Current pinyin versions are given in brackets. See Janis Wilton, *Golden Threads*, Sydney, 2004, p.5.

<sup>8</sup> Darnell, *The Chinese labour trade*, pp.259-261; Maxine Darnell, 'Life and labour for indentured Chinese shepherds in New South Wales, 1847-1855', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, 6, 2004, pp.144-146.

<sup>9</sup> Darnell, *The Chinese labour trade*, especially pp.152-166.

<sup>10</sup> Darnell, 'Life and labour', pp.147-148.

<sup>11</sup> Darnell, *The Chinese labour trade*, pp.258-274 and Darnell, 'Life and labour', pp.148-154.

<sup>12</sup> For a list of Darnell's publications see the Bibliography and the *Different Sights* online database.

One example comes from the family history research done by Ray Poon.<sup>13</sup> He has established that his great grandfather, Robert Key(s) was brought as an indentured labourer from Amoy in 1851. He worked in Queensland and in northern New South Wales and then, in 1865, married Jane Gilligan, the daughter of English convicts. The couple settled in the Tenterfield district and a number of their children remained on the New England Tableland. A family grave is in Tenterfield cemetery.



Grave of Robert Keys and family members, Tenterfield Cemetery, October 2007.

Later Chinese immigrants including some initially attracted to the region by the gold and tin rushes of the mid to late nineteenth century also sought employment on pastoral properties. These included shearers, cooks, gardeners, fencers and general labourers. They are remembered in some of the station histories.

In his account of his family pastoral property of Wallangra, near Inverell, J.R. Black, for example, writes that much of the fencing on the property had been done by Chinese labourers, a number of the blade shearers were Chinese and the ringer in the Wallangra shearing shed in 1899 was a Chinese by the name of 'Ah Pow'.<sup>14</sup> He also observes that his father Richard Black had engaged Chinese to clear and burn the prickly pear on his property Myall

<sup>13</sup> Ray Poon, 'It has made me whole' in *Plantings in a New Land*, ed. Chek Ling, Brisbane, 2001, pp.53-61.

<sup>14</sup> Black, *B Over Wallangra*, pp. 59-60 and 72.

Plains after he came to live there in 1910, and on a map of Wallangra Station there is a site identified as 'The Chinamen's Hut' that is accompanied by the comment '...Chinamen known to have lived there were Peter the station

### Station Records: Ollera



Ollera Station, 1860s.<sup>15</sup>

Ollera Station records are representative of surviving documents from pastoral properties across the New England Tableland held in public and private collections.<sup>16</sup> These records are invaluable for the insights they give into daily routines, living and working conditions, pastoralists and their families, employees, the changing size and nature of the properties, the structures on them, the impact of free selection.

From the Ollera Station Records, Margaret Rodwell has created an evocative and perceptive account of the paternalist nature of the ownership and management of the property by the Everett brothers throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> While her detailed analysis focuses particularly on the English and Scottish immigrants on the property, the presence and working and living conditions of Chinese and Aboriginal employees also emerges.

Maxine Darnell has also used the Ollera Station Records to provide a detailed analysis of the patterns, status and conditions of Chinese indentured labourers of the 1850s.<sup>18</sup> She compares the experiences on Ollera with those on other pastoral properties.

<sup>15</sup> From Lionel Gilbert, *New England from Old Photographs*, Sydney, 1980.p. 27. Gilbert's caption adds: 'Note the complex of slab-and-bark buildings, including shepherds' quarters and stores in an area still known as "The Square".'

<sup>16</sup> For example, browse the holdings of the University of New England Regional Archives Collection, <http://www.une.edu.au/heritage/collections/>

<sup>17</sup> Rodwell, Ollera and its people.

<sup>18</sup> See earlier discussion in this study, and consult the Bibliography.

gardener and Ah Mee, the men's cook'.<sup>19</sup> Black also records three Chinese farm labourers, ('Ah Car, shepherd', 'Ah Fal' and 'Sam Poo, shepherd'), among the notified burials on the property.<sup>20</sup>

In her history of Abington station, Anne Harris mentions that many of the travelling shearers were Chinese, and Elizabeth Gardiner refers to 'many miles of drains' dug by Chinese labourers on Terrible Vale station and to store ledgers that record the names of 'John (Chinaman)' and 'Yellow Charlie'.<sup>21</sup> Lorraine Armstrong quotes an unreferenced contemporary source providing the following description of Chinese shearers on the property Clerkness near Inverell in the mid-nineteenth century:

Chinese shepherds bring their well-shampoo'd mobs from the wash pool to the brush yard: Chinese shearers wielding the blades beneath a bough shed and knocking off at meal-time to eat curry and rice with chopsticks from tin plates, the while jabbering together in their own language.<sup>22</sup>

As the 1890s depression struck, Chinese shearers still had enough of a presence to attract attention from the Amalgamated Shearers Union. It was feared that they would work for less pay and there was a campaign to prevent them from joining the union and to prevent them from getting work in the shearing sheds.<sup>23</sup>

The important role that the Chinese had played as shearers – and as farm labourers more broadly – and the attempts to remove them from the industry and from memory, prompted Chinese-Australian artist Greg Leong to populate Tom Roberts' painting, *Shearing the Rams*, with Chinese shearers.<sup>24</sup> Given that the site of Roberts' subsequent similar painting, *The Golden Fleece*, was the Newstead North shearing shed near Inverell, Leong's provocative creativity is an even stronger reminder that the Chinese played an important – and often under-recognised – part in the early labour force of the pastoral industry in New England. They were there as shepherds, farm labourers, scrub clearers, shearers, and cooks. They shared the landscape and the frontier.

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<sup>19</sup> Black, *B Over Wallangra*, pp. 118 and 151.

<sup>20</sup> Black, *B Over Wallangra*, pp. 153 and 155.

<sup>21</sup> Harris, *Abington*, p.10; Elizabeth Gardiner, *Terrible Vale*, Tamworth, 1988, pp.55-56.

<sup>22</sup> Margaret Lorraine, 'The Clerks of Clerkness', *Tide of Time*, 1, 1968, p.13.

<sup>23</sup> Wilton, *Golden Threads*, p.16.

<sup>24</sup> Wilton, *Golden Threads*, pp. 36-37.

## German farm labourers and shepherds

Like the Chinese, the first Germans in the region came as shepherds and farm labourers for pastoral properties. They arrived from the late 1840s into the 1870s. Many came on contracts; some came as free settlers. They came from two directions: up through the Hunter Valley from Sydney and down through the Darling Downs from Moreton Bay (Brisbane).

In the 1861 census there were about 350 German-born residents in the total non-Aboriginal population of around 9,600 in the New England pastoral district. The highest concentrations were in and around Glen Innes (about 75), Tenterfield (about 90) and the Rocky River goldfields (about 175).<sup>25</sup>

Apart from those attracted to the goldfields, these early Germans were mainly sponsored by the large pastoralists and stations in the region have become known for their employment of Germans. These stations include Dundee, Gostwyck, Newstead, Ohio, Ollera, Rangers Valley and Tenterfield.

Many came bonded to work for two years. They were recruited by agents in Germany, and were in an environment in which emigration increasingly became a familiar option – at least in particular regions. And, often, one family member attracted another, one townsman attracted a neighbour or friend.

In his family history, for example, E. Lloyd Sommerlad writes about his grandfather, Johann Sommerlad, visiting Frankfurt from his hometown of Ober-Rosbach in south eastern Germany (Hesse) in search of emigration opportunities. He signed an indenture to work as a shepherd on the Darling Downs for two years, returned to his hometown and his decision influenced Jakob Blecher (who later changed his name to Blaker) and his fiancée to emigrate as well. All three travelled on the same ship to Moreton Bay, eventually moving to work on stations near Tenterfield.<sup>26</sup>

The work done by the German migrants recruited for the pastoral stations varied. At Ohio, Johann Asimus worked as a carpenter and was possibly involved in building the northern section of the Ohio homestead.<sup>27</sup> Albert Ehsman worked as a shepherd at Newstead as did John Gentz and Peter Hoscher at Myall Creek.<sup>28</sup> William Stenz was a gardener at Newstead from 1852 to 1863 and then a shepherd on neighbouring Paradise Station.<sup>29</sup> Johann Utz was around age 15 when he joined his parents on Rangers

<sup>25</sup> *Census of the Colony of New South Wales taken on the 7th April, 1861*, Sydney, 1862.

<sup>26</sup> E. Lloyd Sommerlad, *The Migrant Shepherd*, Sydney, 1986, pp.20-21.

<sup>27</sup> Oppenheimer and Mitchell, *An Australian Clan*, p.116.

<sup>28</sup> Elizabeth Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, Inverell, 1981, pp. 120 and 251.

<sup>29</sup> Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, p. 254.

Valley. He worked first as a carrier taking rations to the shepherds and was later placed in charge of the Dundee station store.<sup>30</sup> These men, and the many other German migrants, employed on the pastoral stations, provided a needed workforce. Their imprints on the industry and on the historical record emerge mainly from station, immigration and family history records and from their associations with the histories of particular pastoral stations.

The following entry for Albert Ehsman in the Newstead station ledgers provides an indication of the money earned and work done by, in this case, both Albert Ehsman and his wife. The entry is for August 1860 to February 1861. The couple had married in 1860.

Ehsman, Albert – shearer. 1 week 4 days work £1/10/0; 9 weeks 2 days droving sheep £18/13/4; 15 days sheepwashing £4/10/0; shearing 1951 sheep @ 3/9 per score £18/5/3; kitchen work Mrs Ehsman £4; 8 weeks wages for cooking £6/13/4; breaking in 2 cows @ 5/- per head £3. Less stores including raisins, currents\*, pickles, tea, sardines, matches, dog chain (4/-), boots and shirt.<sup>31</sup>

Some of these early German migrants continued to work as farm labourers and on the stations to which they were originally contracted. Christoph Eichorn provides one example. He arrived in Australia in 1855 and was contracted to work as a shepherd on Gostwyck Station. He married Minna Vaupel, the daughter of another German immigrant who worked as a shepherd at Gostwyck. The Eichorns settled on the station where they raised a family of twelve children and where Christoph Eichorn continued to gain employment. By 1881 he was listed as a boundary rider.<sup>32</sup>

Others among the early German pastoral labourers, once their contracts were worked out and they had managed to establish themselves, moved on to other opportunities: free selection of their own farms and a variety of trades and service industries being the most common. A number settled in New England. Unlike their Chinese counterparts, many of the German pastoral workers brought their wives and families with them or married, often to the daughters of fellow German migrants, once in Australia. Descendants are still in the region.

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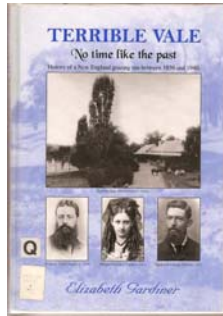
<sup>30</sup> Eileen Hartmann, *Dunde: The Land and Its People*, Dundee, 1979, p.208.

<sup>31</sup> Newstead Station Ledger, transcribed by Inverell and District Family History Group.

<sup>32</sup> Helen Nancarrow, *Brandscheid's Vine*, Armidale, 2001, pp.43-45; *Pioneer Register of New England*, Armidale, 2003, p. 90; Paul Eichorn, 'Henry Dangar's twenty German workmen in Australia', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 50, 2007, pp.23-30.



### Station Histories: Terrible Vale and the Doring family

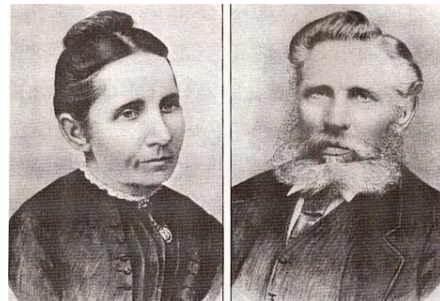


Elizabeth Gardiner's history of Terrible Vale station is one of a number of station histories written by descendants of early owners of New England pastoral properties.<sup>33</sup> With access to family records and memories and with their strong attachments to the stations, these histories tend to concentrate on the station owners and their families, and on the fluctuations in the size and productivity of the enterprises. In the process, they sometimes provide leads on the histories of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds who worked on their properties.

Gardiner, for example, includes details about the Doring family.<sup>34</sup> She notes that Johannes and Charita Doring and their six children (aged between 2 and 12) arrived from Germany in 1855. From 1856 to 1866 Johannes worked as a gardener on Terrible Vale. His sons and two future sons-in-law also worked there.

In 1867 there was a dispute between Doring and members of the Taylor family who owned Terrible Vale. Doring had selected and improved forty acres of land which had allegedly not been sold 'in the proper manner'. The dispute was resolved when Doring was ejected from the property and the Taylors declared the rightful owners. Gardiner, referencing her discussion to Land Title records, notes: '...it was considered at the time that an ex-shepherd of Terrible Vale had no claim to ownership of improvements he had made with his own hands.'

It is possible that the disagreement was a result of the 'dummying' that characterised pastoral property owners' responses to the Robertson Land Acts. They had sections of their land selected by employees, and then reverting to their ownership.<sup>35</sup> Doring may not have complied.



Johanna Franceska (nee Doring) and John Schmidt.<sup>36</sup> Johanna was the eldest daughter of Johannes and Charita Doring. She met, and in 1860, married fellow German migrant, John Schmidt (later Smith), who worked as a gardener on Terrible Vale.

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Gardiner, *Terrible Vale*, Tamworth, 1998. For examples of other station histories, consult the Bibliography and the *Different Sights* online database.

<sup>34</sup> Gardiner, *Terrible Vale*, pp.35-36, 60, 61, 69, 70 and 89.

<sup>35</sup> See Bill Gammage, 'Who gained, and who was meant to gain, from land selection in New South Wales?', *Australian Historical Studies*, 24/94, 1990, pp.104-122; and Rodwell, Ollera and its people, especially pp.226-230 and 270-287;

<sup>36</sup> Images and details from Gardiner, *Terrible Vale*, p.38.

### **Italian POWs, a Danish farm labourer and a Japanese feedlot**

The place of Germans and Chinese as groups of migrants from specific cultural backgrounds in the pastoral labour force of the nineteenth century is not mirrored in the twentieth century with, perhaps the exception of the presence of Italian prisoners-of-war during the Second World War. Some Italian prisoners-of-war were seconded to work in the pastoral industry and their presence as farm labourers in their distinctively dyed uniforms is cemented in local memories. Jim Swales of the property, Woodlands, was a child at the time and he could recall the Italians' '...Australian army service dress dyed a brilliant plum colour which they referred to as *rosa*'.<sup>37</sup> He also remembers that the two prisoners-of-war allocated to the family property

...had no experience with stock work and didn't do much with stock here, just getting up the cows and feeding. They were very good at vegetable gardening and vine culture and rejuvenated the grape vines on the houses and they grew vegetables.

They were very clever with their hands. I still have a couple of bird traps that they made, something after the style of a rat trap, just a bit of twisted wire made out of a bit of fencing wire or cable to work as a spring, and they would catch parrots where there was oats or chaff on the ground. They just wanted them for pets.<sup>38</sup>

Anne Harris similarly recalls the three Italian prisoners-of-war who worked for her father, G.E. Foster, on the family property, Abington. She writes:

They wore mulberry coloured shirts and trousers and spoke only Italian. We were issued with phrase books and there was a great deal of cheerful shouting and gesticulating. The men received no wages, but payment for their services was made to an Army Captain who came at regular intervals with an interpreter who could sort out problems arising from language difficulties, and with a mobile canteen which supplied the Italians with whatever they needed in the way of simple 'shopping', he also brought their letters from home. Two of the Italians had been farmers, and they seemed happy to be out in the country and far from the War. One ... Divino, worked as milkman and gardener at the Cottage; the other, Luci, worked with the farmer, and also pruned William Beard's old fruit trees at the Junction ... He returned to live in Australia after the war. The third prisoner, Minici, had been a teacher; he was better educated, more politically aware

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<sup>37</sup> Anne Harris, *Old Stations on the Gwydir*, Sydney, 2000, p.159.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Harris, *Old Stations on the Gwydir*, p.159.

and much more discontented. He worked with Alf Hatcher the stud cattle man, wrote poetry and caused trouble. All three lived in Tobin's cottage, where they grew their own vegetables and made great sheets of pasta which they dried in the sun.<sup>39</sup>

Like the Luci remembered by Anne Harris, Angelo Cavallaro spent time as a prisoner-of-war working on a property in New England and returned to Australia and to the New England district after the war.<sup>40</sup> So too did Orfeo (Theo) Campagner.<sup>41</sup> Some of the isolation, strangeness and ultimately comfort of their time working on the farms during the war is captured in Orfeo Campagner's gritty comment:

But oh gosh, I went through something at Gowrie.<sup>42</sup> We was working hard there but we had the satisfaction about that, you know.<sup>43</sup>



Orfeo Campagner (centre) with another Italian prisoner-of-war (right) and the son of the owner of the Inverell property where he worked during the Second World War. John Hall uses this photograph to emphasise his point that, when he interviewed them in the late 1990s, both farmers' families and ex-prisoners of war shared positive memories of their experiences. Hall notes that the three men were posing before a game of tennis. He wryly observes: 'Social activities were supposedly against the rules.'<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Harris, *Abington*, pp.133-134.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Angelo Cavallaro, 4 November 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>41</sup> Liz Johnston, 'The Italian jobs', *Bulletin*, 17 February 1998, pp. 28-30 and 'Orfeo will remain in their hearts forever', *Inverell Times*, 15 October 2004.

<sup>42</sup> Gowrie is the property outside Inverell on which Campagner worked while a POW.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Johnston, 'The Italian jobs', p.28.

<sup>44</sup> Image and details from John Hall, 'Private memories, public perceptions: Italian prisoners of war in northern New South Wales', *Limina*, 5, 1999, p.57.

## Government Records, Photographs, Memories and Italian POWs

The regulation of Italian prisoners-of-war during the Second World War generated records now held in the National Archives. Personal details, movements within Australia, return to Italy are recorded. There are also photographs. These records are complemented by oral history interviews with Italian prisoners-of-war who returned to Australia and with members of the farming families on whose properties they worked, and by local newspaper reports of their presence.<sup>45</sup>

### Angelo Cavallaro

In 1983 Angelo Cavallaro (born in 1913) shared aspects of his life experiences in an oral history interview.<sup>46</sup> In heavily accented English, he describes how he left school at around nine years of age to work with his father as a farm labourer and then on the railways. At age 18, he was called on to do his army service. The timing was not good. He ended up being sent to Abyssinia. He remembers this as a 'horrible time'.

On his return from Abyssinia arrangements were made to be married in September. It was 1939 and, before the marriage could take place, he was again called up. The wedding was postponed. By June 1940 he was at Tobruk where in January 1941 he, along with many of his countrymen, was taken as a prisoner-of-war. He was eventually among those Italians who were brought to Australia where he spent time at Cowra and then three and a half years working for a farmer at Kingstown near Uralla.

In 1947, Cavallaro returned to Italy. He was disillusioned. There was no recompense for his years in the army. He could not settle. The Kingstown farmer had kept in touch, sponsored him and his family to go to Australia and provided him with work and a home.



Left: Angelo Cavallaro's Prisoner of War Service and Casualty Form<sup>47</sup> Right: Group of Italian prisoners of war interned at No.12 POW Group, Cowra. Angelo Cavallaro is second from the right in the front row.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> John Hall has written a number of articles on Italian prisoners-of-war in northern New South Wales using these sources. His work is listed in the Bibliography.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Angelo Cavallaro, 4 November 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>47</sup> NAA: MP1103/1: 8625457.

Other migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds have joined the pastoral labour force although usually as individuals rather than as part of organised schemes or chain migration networks. Peder Christensen provides but one example. From a farming background in Denmark, he migrated to Australia in mid-1966. On board the ship on the way to Australia he met residents from Armidale who organised for him to get work on pastoral stations in the district. He began his working life in Australia as a farm labourer on different properties in the district before moving on to work, for a period, on the cotton farms in the Narrabri district.<sup>49</sup>

By the time Peder Christensen joined the pastoral labour force, mechanization, changing markets and economies, pastoral improvement, diversification, the subdivision of some of the large pastoral stations, and the erosion of the political, social and economic power of the pastoralists had altered the shape, tone and ownership of the industry. New owners, different practices, different uses highlight these changes.

One example of the changes in the New England pastoral industry comes from the change in ownership to the historically significant Newstead property and the adjoining Danthonia near Inverell. In 1999 the two properties were purchased by the Bruderhof community. Based in America, the Bruderhof community in Inverell included members from Paraguay, the United States and Britain, and traces its origins to 1920s Germany and earlier to the anabaptists. The intention was to establish a small village for community members on the two properties, and to finance their enterprise through ventures such as the design and creation of signs for export and for sale locally.<sup>50</sup> Initially, cultural and religious difference created barriers between the Bruderhof and the local community. However by 2005 when members of the community were having trouble with their visas, the Bruderhof had gained strong local support.<sup>51</sup> In that year, Newstead was sold but the Bruderhof continued to develop their base on Danthonia, and the productivity of their sign making business is apparent in the Bruderhof signs marking towns and businesses throughout the region.

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with Peder Christensen, 31 June 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>50</sup> Nick Franklin, 'An encounter with the Bruderhof', *Encounter*, ABC Radio National, 5 June 2005, [www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/enc/stories/s1380704.html](http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/enc/stories/s1380704.html)

<sup>51</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21-25 May 2005.



An example of the Bruderhof designed and supplied signs that are becoming a feature of streetscapes and roadsides in New England. This one is the sign encountered entering Tenterfield from the south along the New England Highway.

A final example of changes in the ownership and operation of pastoral stations from their origins as wool-producing enterprises owned by mainly English and Scottish born families to the diverse activities and ownership of the late twentieth century comes from Rangers Valley Station located about 30 kilometres north of Glen Innes. First taken up by English-born Oswald Bloxsome in 1839, the station was among those that recruited Chinese and German labourers in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup> Company websites and archival directories reiterate that it was predominantly a wool-producing enterprise with some cattle.<sup>53</sup> With free selection in the late nineteenth century and soldier settlement schemes in the first half of the twentieth century, the size of the property decreased. As well, ownership moved from the Bloxsoles in the 1890s to the Campbell brothers and then, in the 1950s to the Crothers family. Through this changing ownership, the station also moved from sheep to cattle and in the 1980s gained approval for a feedlot development. An early partner in that development was the Marubeni Corporation of Japan. In the 1990s Marubeni became the primary owner of the feedlot and under their management, the feedlot has expanded. The

<sup>52</sup> Darnell, *The Chinese labour trade*, p.196 and Hartmann, *Dundee*.

<sup>53</sup> *Unlocking Regional Memory*, Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre, last updated August 2006, [www.nswera.net.au/urm.htm](http://www.nswera.net.au/urm.htm); *Rangers Valley* (accessed May 2008), [www.rvalley.com.au](http://www.rvalley.com.au); 'Cowboys and kangaroos: Rangers Valley Cattle Station Pty Ltd', *Shosha* (Quarterly newsletter of the Marubeni Corporation), 85, Autumn 2005, [www.marubeni.com/dbps\\_data/material/maruco\\_en/data/magazines/pdf/2005/shosha\\_85.pdf](http://www.marubeni.com/dbps_data/material/maruco_en/data/magazines/pdf/2005/shosha_85.pdf) (accessed May 2008).

business operates with both Australian-born and Japanese-born staff, and one of its main export markets is Japan.

For Rangers Valley, the size of the property has decreased, sheep have been replaced by cattle, wool by meat, English and Australian born owners by Japanese owners, Chinese indentured labourers by Japanese managers. For Danthonia, pastoralism is supplemented by a commercial sign making business, and the property has moved from family ownership and occupancy to a community run cooperative. As well, new ownership has also introduced religious practices new to the locality, with cultural roots in Germany and with members coming from a variety of cultural backgrounds, both English-speaking and non-English-speaking.

## GEMS AND MINERALS

A visit to the Emmaville Mining Museum provides an encounter with samples of the many different minerals and gemstones mined in and around Emmaville, Inverell and Tingha since the late nineteenth century. Here you can see (and buy) grass stones, diamonds, sapphires, topaz, quartz, crystal, emeralds and tin. Similarly, the street names of Tingha act as reminders of the importance of the mining industry in the locality and reminders also of the hopes that brought people to the district. The streets here were not paved with gold but the hope was that other gems and minerals would be as lucrative. The street names are Ruby, Amethyst, Diamond, Jasper, Garnett, Topaz, Opal, Emerald, Sapphire and Agate. The name of the town itself has embedded in it the most productive of all the minerals for the locality: tin.<sup>1</sup> These were the minerals and gems uncovered from the 1870s. By this time, there had already been rushes to profit from gold discoveries elsewhere in New England.

### Gold

The Tableland's first – and biggest – gold find and rush started in the early 1850s with the discovery of gold at Rocky River near Uralla. From 1851 to 1856 the population working the alluvial deposits remained at between 300 and 500.<sup>2</sup> Then, with the discovery of some very productive deep leads in 1856, the population swelled: by May it reached 1,200, by July 3,000, and by mid-September 4,500.<sup>3</sup> In that peak year, the goldfield yielded 40,000 ounces of gold representing 22 per cent of the colony's total gold production.<sup>4</sup>

Among those who came to the Rocky River fields were Americans, Chinese, Germans and French. Their presence and the overall tone, noise and activity of the goldfields is captured in contemporary newspaper reports. The *Armidale Express* of 7 June 1856, for example, reported:

These diggings ... cover an area of at least five miles. The number of licensed diggers exceeds 700 which, with others not requiring licences, would in all probability make the gross number now located here fully 1,200. Many parties consisting from three to six persons, are earning from £20 to £60 per week. Living is cheap. ... A great

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<sup>1</sup> Although the name came from 'Tiengah', a squatting run.

<sup>2</sup> R.B.Walker, *Old New England*, Sydney, 1966, p.49.

<sup>3</sup> Walker, *Old New England*, p.50.

<sup>4</sup> Walker, *Old New England*, p.50.



number of Chinese are at work here, and, as at the other diggings, these are fortunate and persevering. ... Already we have three public houses (and more in prospect), six stores, five butchers, two bakers, six public and a number of private boarding houses, four blacksmiths, shoemakers, tailors, lolly-pop makers and barbers.<sup>5</sup>

Calico tents, rapidly constructed slab huts, wandering livestock, crowded inns, the smell of food, the flies, the stench of latrines, the trenches and gullies created by mining, the shapes of mining equipment all worked to alter the landscape and to shape the miners' experiences. So too did the sounds of men digging, shovelling, panning, talking – in a number of different languages – and the shouting and revelling that was part of goldfields life. One visitor reported that, on moving between the tents at night, he could hear

... the loud voices of all nations, the playing of bagpipes, fiddles, flutes, organs, and hurdy-gurdies, the firing of pistols and barking of dogs and a number of other hubbubs too numerous to mention.<sup>6</sup>

Similar sights could be encountered as gold was discovered elsewhere on and near the Tableland. At Bingara, just to the west of the Tableland, gold was first found in 1852. By November the following year, there were around 250 people in the area and by 1861, around 1,900.<sup>7</sup> Gold was also found at Nundle near Tamworth, and at Drake near Tenterfield. These discoveries brought population increases to the goldfields themselves and to the neighbouring towns as enterprising businessmen set about providing the services and supplies needed to sustain the mining population and industry. The 1861 census reflected this pattern. Tenterfield Registry District which included the Timbarra goldfields recorded a population of 689, and Tenterfield town had another 676. Among these were half a dozen nationalities: Australian-born (448), British (654), American (9), Chinese (124), German (88) and French (3).<sup>8</sup> Later in the century, deep lead gold was mined at Hillgrove and Metz and those towns similarly witnessed a boost in population, although there the overseas-born cultural mix was less pronounced.<sup>9</sup>

Each of the goldfields went through a pattern of boom and then, as the gold was mined out, the ebbing away of productivity and population. At Rocky River, for example, by 1866 the population of the goldfield was down to 700 of whom just under half were Chinese.<sup>10</sup> By the early twentieth century all that

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Ian Handley, *The Land of the McCrossins*, Uralla, 1979, p.6.

<sup>6</sup> *Armidale Express*, 14 June 1856 quoted in Walker, *Old New England*, p.53.

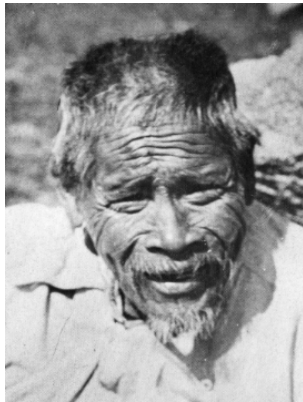
<sup>7</sup> J.T.Wearne, *Bingara 1827-1937*, Bingara, 1989, p.21.

<sup>8</sup> *Census of the Colony of New South Wales taken on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 1861*, Sydney, 1862.

<sup>9</sup> Graham Wilson and Bruce Cady, *Hillgrove*, Armidale, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Walker, *Old New England*, p.51.

remained, according to local historian Ian Handley, were ‘a school, a store owned by Sam Bow, the Gold Diggers Arms Hotel (soon to close) and a fruit seller’.<sup>11</sup> By 2006, archaeologist Pam Watson observed that the settlement at Rocky River along with many of the other Tableland gold settlements have left ‘no obvious trace on the landscape’. It is the sub-surface remains which may offer some evidence of the extent and nature of the towns and their lifestyles. This is in contrast to the land surfaces which remain scarred and gouged by mining, and to the degradation of the natural environment as a result of the mining processes.<sup>12</sup> The other traces that remain are the names given to particular locations; the descriptions, people and details provided in government reports, newspapers and within family records and memories; occasional photographs; and the artefacts and items dug from the goldfields and now in private and public collections.



(left) Chinese prospector at Rocky River near Uralla, about 1910, and (right) ‘Sun Kai, last of the Chinese miners’ on the Drake/Timbarra goldfields near Tenterfield, about 1930.

The photograph on the left has been reproduced in a couple of local histories. In Ian Handley’s account of Uralla and the Rocky River goldfields, he uses the caption ‘Hatto. A typical Chinese miner’.<sup>13</sup> In his *New England from Old Photographs*, Lionel Gilbert writes: ‘Hatto, one of the last Chinese prospectors at Rocky River... He was so called because he was rarely, as here, seen without his hat. About 1910.’<sup>14</sup>

The photograph on the right is also published in a local history and is accompanied by shared memories about Sun Kai being in the district for about 70 years and living a fairly isolated existence. In this photograph, the caption notes, he is wearing clothes given to him by members of the local Chinese community.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Handley, *The Land of the McCrossins*, p.10.

<sup>12</sup> Pamela Watson, ‘The archaeology of the new peoples’ in *High Lean Country*, ed. Alan Atkinson et.al., Sydney, 2006, p.260.

<sup>13</sup> Ian Handley, *The Land of the McCrossins*, p.7.

<sup>14</sup> Lionel Gilbert, *New England from Old Photographs*, Sydney, 1980, p. 24.

<sup>15</sup> Harry Snowden, *Drake*, Sydney, 1987, p.77.

**Objects: Gold**

View of the Rocky River Goldfields display at McCrossins Mill Museum, Uralla.

The emphasis in the Rocky River display is on the Chinese presence. Objects include equipment and technology used in mining. Most of the items have been donated by local residents, and their exact locations and provenance have not always been recorded. They can, however, convey ideas about the nature of the work and innovation required to mine for gold.<sup>16</sup> For example:

The **timber framework** viewed in the left foreground of the above photograph has been identified as a mine shaft. It was dug up and reassembled by local historian, Arnold Goode, who believes that the framework was created by Chinese miners. The framework is certainly representative of the make do nature of many mining structures.



**Gold washing cradle.** This cradle is representative of the gold washing cradles used on the goldfields at Rocky River and elsewhere. The cradle has two sieves. Earth and water were shovelled on to the top sieve. The cradle was then rocked backwards and forwards, forcing the water and earth through the sieve. As gold is the heaviest metal, it sank to the bottom and was caught in the base of the cradle

<sup>16</sup> Michael Pearson and Barry McGowan, *Mining Heritage Places: Assessment Manual*, Canberra, 2000, pp.79-120 provide a glossary of mining terminology that includes descriptions and some illustrations of different types of equipment. See also Bruce Moore, *Gold! Gold! Gold!*, Melbourne, 2000.

## Tin

In 1873 the Border tin region alone produced more tin than any other region or country in the world, and Australia was the world's largest tin producer in the decade 1873-82.<sup>17</sup>

At the heart of the tin producing district in northern New South Wales sat the townships of Tingha and Emmaville. Today, the towns and their surrounding landscapes speak of the booms and busts of tin mining and of the ways in which hundreds of men digging, panning, washing, sluicing and dredging created man-made water holes, silted and altered the course of river beds and creeks, eroded slabs of ground, and washed away layers of top soil in their successful (and unsuccessful) searches for tin ore.

As with the gold rushes, the discovery of tin attracted people from different occupations, from other colonies and from countries outside Australia. Many of those who came were moving on from goldfields that had ceased to prove profitable. Among the overseas-born were Americans, English, Cornish, Danish, Germans, New Zealanders, and Scots. By far the largest group of overseas-born from non-English-speaking backgrounds were the Chinese.

In the 1870s and 1880s Chinese miners played an important part in the industry especially as, in these first two decades following the discovery, the mining was mainly alluvial, required hard labour rather than capital, and used basic mining equipment: hide or tin buckets, timber and rope windlasses, shovels, sluice boxes, and Californian pumps. In his report on the tin fields at Vegetable Creek (Emmaville) in the early 1880s, Charles Lyne wrote:

In every direction these parties of Chinamen can be seen at work, each man having his allotted task, and all exhibiting unremitting industry. Some are employed stripping the surface earth which lies above the washdirt, others wheel away the wash to the sluice-boxes, others again attend to the sluicing, and a fourth contingent work a kind of treadmill which keeps a Californian pump in motion, and supplies the sluice-boxes with the necessary stream of water.<sup>18</sup>

The Chinese tended to work in groups and most were tributers – they worked for themselves but were under contract to the mine owner to pay him a proportion of the tin that they mined or worked the tin themselves, paying all the costs of mining and receiving a fixed sum per ton from the mine owner.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*, Melbourne, 1978, p.131.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Lyne, *The Industries of New South Wales*, Sydney, 1882, p.182.

<sup>19</sup> Ian Lobsey, 'The Creek', Emmaville, 1972, p.26.

**Objects: Tin Mining**

In the back shed of the Wing Hing Long Store and Museum in Tingha, there is a collection of tin mining equipment.



**Windlass and bucket.** A windlass was used to raise material from a mine shaft.

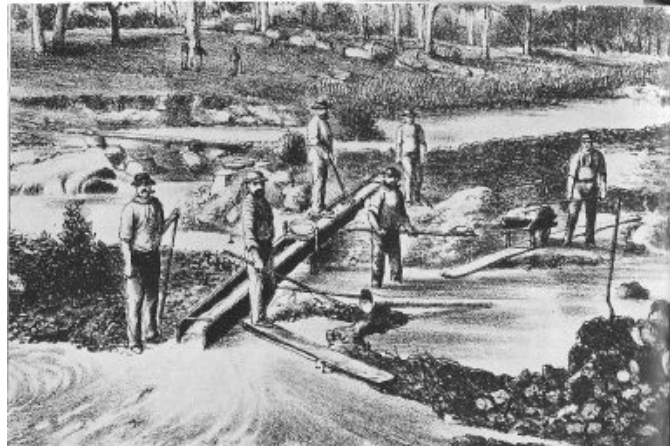


(above) **Leather bucket coated with dried mud.** Local resident, Ron Pickering, believes that this is the type of bucket that was used by many Chinese as well as European miners.

(Left) A **'willoughby'** donated by local resident Beattie Hawkins. A 'willoughby' is a timber and tin construction for separating tin from other materials.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> For a description of a willoughby and how it works see Helen Brown, *Tin at Tingha*, Armidale, 1982, pp.38-39. On mining equipment see Pearson and McGowan, *Mining Heritage Places*.

These were rich alluvial tin fields whose productivity peaked in 1883 when New South Wales exported 9,125 tons of tin, with most of it coming from the tin mining districts in New England.<sup>21</sup> The peak was also reflected in the numbers of miners: in 1880 in and around Emmaville alone there were about 950 European and 1,200 Chinese miners, and by 1883 the number of Chinese had increased to 2,000.<sup>22</sup> In the Tingha district by 1881 there were 900 Chinese and 600 European miners.<sup>23</sup>



Sluicing for tin ore, Britannia Tin Mine, Cope's Creek, 1873-1874.<sup>24</sup>

Working and re-working the surfaces, however, meant that the alluvial deposits steadily disappeared, and the productivity declined. This decline was heightened by droughts, floods and the economic depression of the 1890s. By 1900 the export figure for tin for New South Wales had dropped to 916 tons.<sup>25</sup>

As the alluvial tin was mined out, the majority of the miners moved on: there was no longer good money to be made from the hard labour of surface mining. By 1895, there were about 250 European and 150 Chinese miners in the Tingha area and 350 European and 200 Chinese around Emmaville.<sup>26</sup>

Tin mining was revived in the early twentieth century with the introduction of company owned dredging machines and their pumps which sent high pressured water to expose and mine deep leads. By 1908 about 60 percent of

<sup>21</sup> Walker, *Old New England*, p.94.

<sup>22</sup> Barry McGowan, 'The economics and organisation of Chinese mining in colonial Australia', *Australian Economic Review*, 45/2, 2005, p.135.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, Inverell, 1981, p.84.

<sup>24</sup> Reproduced in Walker, *Old New England*, p.102 from the original in *Votes and Proceedings of the NSW Legislative Assembly, 1873-1874*, p.780.

<sup>25</sup> Walker, *Old New England*, p.94.

<sup>26</sup> McGowan, 'The economics and organisation of Chinese mining', p.135.

the tin production in the district came from dredging.<sup>27</sup> Very few Chinese were involved in these enterprises. Those Chinese who stayed in the tin mining districts had tended to move to other enterprises: market gardening, storekeeping, and other service occupations. Some continued to seek a living, at least partly from tin mining.

Alvena Gibbs (born 1915) grew up on The Gulf near Emmaville. She recalled her parents, Charles and Ellen Kumsing, and herself working the tin:

Dad'd work down the bottom and Mum'd pull the dirt up on a windlass. [They were] mining and selling tin. Tin was only 3 pence a pound. And when I worked out there it was only 3 pence a pound. ... I was roundabout 18 or 19.<sup>28</sup>



Ellen Kumsing with her eldest grandson, Neville Rose, about 1939.<sup>29</sup>

Ernest Sue Fong's father, George Sue Fong, was also a tin miner who subsequently opened a general store and, as he got older, Ernest Sue Fong also tried his hand at tin mining. He worked with his uncle, Archie Gorkong, and brother-in-law, Sid Lewis. Ernest described the process:

... everybody ... when they go tin mining we had all different methods. Naturally tin mining was, in Emmaville, ... all alluvial, ... it's all on top of the ground and under the ground and worked in about 8 foot ground. And how we used to do it : ... we bought a ... little engine and a pump and we had a sluice box. And then we used to get [to] ... where the ... tin is. You can't get it everywhere. It's mainly in gutters

<sup>27</sup> *Yearbook Australia 1910*

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Alvena Gibbs, 22 March 1990. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>29</sup> Original lent by Alvena Gibbs.

so we used to find a gutter and dig all the gutter, take the top off, and get the wash and then you get the wash that's carrying the tin and ... we used to put it in a barrow, take it over to our race where the pump is and one bloke would be over there, like Sid standing up on the box and loosening it all up and wash it and used ... a hopper plate (we used to call it) it had holes in it like that. ... what didn't go down underneath the hopper plate we used to throw it aside and then all the tin used to go down into the box. ... Those days we used to get 9 pence a pound for tin, 9 pence a pound mind you. So if you get a hundredweight of tin we used to have about 8 pound or something ... you've got the 3 of us, so we only had 3 pound each or something, yeah. ... We used to get a hundredweight a week, sometimes more if we got onto a good patch, but then ... we'd run out and then we had nothing, no money.<sup>30</sup>

## Entrepreneurs

The majority of those attracted to mining, including immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds, provided the labour. They worked long hours on their own small claims or worked for bosses. They panned, dug mine shafts, dredged. And they worked seeking not just gold and tin but other gems and minerals that surfaced at different times in New England – diamonds, sapphires, arsenic, molybdenite. Among the mine owners and entrepreneurs, however, there were a small number of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Swedish-born Peter Speare, for example, had set up business as a butcher in Armidale in the late 1850s. By the 1870s his company, Moore Speare and Company was working antimony at Baker's Creek Gorge, Hillgrove, where in 1878 they discovered a gold reef.<sup>31</sup> German-born Valentine Sachs originally set up as a tinsmith in Glen Innes in the late 1880s. By 1901 he was successfully mining molybdenite at his Kingsgate Mine near Glen Innes.<sup>32</sup> And Belgian-born diamond cutter Jules Joris and his son, Albert, were instrumental in developing mining for diamonds at Copeton near Inverell.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Ernest Sue Fong, 27 March 1990. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>31</sup> R. Mainwaring, *Tramways Down the Gorge*, Sydney, 1986, p.86.

<sup>32</sup> *Glen Innes Examiner*, 19 November 1932.

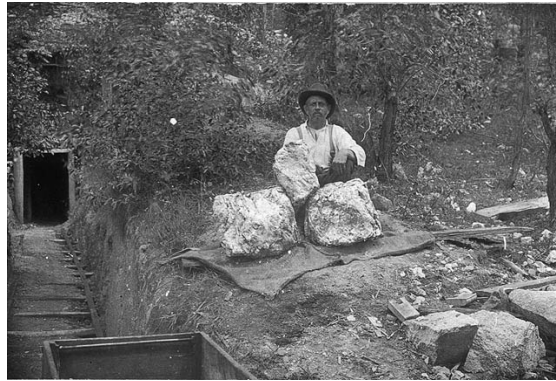
<sup>33</sup> Helen Brown, *Tin at Tingha*, Armidale, 1982, pp.75-76 and 79; Kevin Fahy, 'Joris, Joannes Julius Alphonsus (1888-1963)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online*, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140669b.htm>



### Photographs: molybdenite mining

Valentine Sachs was working as a tinsmith in Grey Street, Glen Innes in the late 1880s, and in the 1890s he was also a partner in a local soap factory. At one time a mayor of the town, he made significant profit from mining molybdenite at the Kingsgate mine near Glen Innes. He secured the lease of his block of land in 1901 and began sending the ore to Sydney in 1903.<sup>34</sup>

The man and his mine with its sheds, tunnels, tracks and mining equipment can be seen in a series of photographs taken early in the twentieth century.



Valentine Sachs at his mine with samples of the ore, 1905.<sup>35</sup>



Valentine Sachs' molybdenite mine, Kingsgate, near Glen Innes, about 1905.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Glen Innes Examiner*, 6 November 1888, 3 March 1891, 9 June 1893, 19 November 1932.

<sup>35</sup> Reproduced in *Land of the Beardies History House Bulletin*, 20/1, June 1992, p.31 with the photograph attributed to the Glen Innes and District Historical Society.

<sup>36</sup> University of New England Heritage Centre and Regional Archives. Original from NSW Department of Mines.

## GRAIN, VEGETABLES, TOBACCO AND GRAPES

Until the late nineteenth century, the focus of European farming on the New England Tableland was pastoralism, especially wool production. With the 1861 Robertson Land Acts and subsequent schemes for closer settlement, opportunities were opened for the acquisition and development of smaller farms, many devoted to crops. R.B. Walker, for example, notes that by 1901, the amount of cultivated land in the area had increased fourteenfold and was accompanied by an increase in the agricultural labour force. This included some larger properties, especially on the western side of the Tableland, given over to wheat as well as a number of smaller crops – oats, maize, potatoes, tobacco, orchards, wine growing and market gardens.<sup>1</sup> A similar mix of crops continued throughout the twentieth century with fluctuations due to climate and market forces, and with changes in farming practices and labour needs brought about through mechanisation and the increased use of chemicals and other innovations seen to improve productivity.

The presence of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds can be traced through these developments. In particular, they played their part in the agricultural labour force found ploughing and harvesting the crops, and in the labour intensive work involved in market gardens, orchards and tobacco farms. They worked as employees, seasonal labourers, sharefarmers. Some eventually became small farm owners, an opportunity first made possible by the 1861 free selection legislation.

### Free Selectors

By forcing the subdivision of pastoral properties and creating the opportunity to purchase Crown Land, the 1861 Robertson Land Acts opened the way for the establishment of small farms. The expectation was that these farms would be based largely on agricultural pursuits.<sup>2</sup> The struggles leading up to the legislation and the ingenious ways in which pastoralists ensured that they kept ownership of the most significant blocks provide evidence of the power of the squattocracy.<sup>3</sup> What is of interest here, are the immigrants from non-English-

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<sup>1</sup> R.B. Walker, *Old New England*, Sydney, 1966, p.63.

<sup>2</sup> Walker, *Old New England*, p.62.

<sup>3</sup> For studies of this see Bill Gammage, 'Who gained and who was meant to gain from land selection in New South Wales?', *Australian Historical Studies*, 24/94, 1990, pp.104-122; John Ferry, 'Mapping the New South Wales Free Selection Acts in colonial New England', *Globe*, 43, 1995, pp.29-42; and Margaret Rodwell, *Ollera and its people*, PhD thesis, University of New England, 2006, especially pp.272-287.

speaking backgrounds who took advantage of the legislation, acquired and worked their own farms, and managed to have those farms remain in family ownership across generations. They can be traced through naturalisation, land title, local newspaper and family history records.

In Inverell, there was John Guan. Born in China, he was in the Inverell district by 1870 when he applied for naturalisation. He stated that he had arrived in Australia in 1851, his primary occupation was a farmer and he desired legal title to land.<sup>4</sup> In 1870s directories he is listed as a farmer, and by the time of his death in 1894, he owned properties in Oliver Street, Inverell, and land at Dog Trap outside Inverell.<sup>5</sup> Given the time of his arrival in Australia, John Guan possibly first came to the district as an indentured Chinese labourer.

Like John Guan, a number of German migrants who were first brought to the Tableland as labourers for the pastoral properties, took up land under the free selection acts. They tended to select properties in groups. Around Tenterfield there was Jacob Heiss, Claus Lohse, Georg Petrie, and Johan Heinrich (John Henry) Sommerlad. Around Dundee, there was Wilhelm Bargaen, Herman Hartmann, Frederick Kiehne, Johann (John) Baptist Kneipp, and Charles Schmidt (Smith). At Kelly's Plains, south of Armidale, and at Tilbuster and Puddleduck, north of Armidale, there was Ambros Brandscheid, Wilhelm Dill, David Fittler, Conrad Fuchs, Andreas and Anton Lasker, August Mies, Jacob Frederick Scheef, and Ernst Gottlieb Schwilk.<sup>6</sup>



Peter Lasker outside his cottage, Knob's Road, Kelly's Plains, about 1920.<sup>7</sup>

Peter Lasker migrated to Australia at the age of 11 and worked with his father and brothers as shepherds on Gostwyck Station. During the Rocky River gold rushes they also grew potatoes for the miners. By the time of his naturalisation in 1878, the family had selected land at Kelly's Plains and farmed it in a partnership. In 1886 the land was sold to Peter Lasker.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Naturalisation certificate of John Guan, 25 August 1870, Certificate No.097, Memorial No. 70/07046, State Records of New South Wales entered in Terri McCormack (developer), Chinese Naturalisation Database, NSW 1857-1887 available at <http://www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au/naturalisation.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, Inverell, 1981, p.251.

<sup>6</sup> For profiles of these and other free selectors see the *Different Sights* online database.

<sup>7</sup> Image from UNE Heritage Centre and Regional Archives: A1609: P4971.

<sup>8</sup> Helen Nancarrow, *Brandscheid's Vine*, Armidale, 2001, pp.82-83; Armidale Family History Group, *Pioneer Register of New England*, Armidale, 2003, p.167.

### Constructing a community history: Dundee's German settlers

Among nineteenth century settlers in the Dundee area north of Glen Innes there were a number of German families. The men were originally brought to work as labourers on nearby pastoral properties. A number became free selectors. Some named their properties after their home towns and districts in Germany. Second and third generations also settled in the locality.

In the 1970s Eileen Hartmann published a book on the district.<sup>9</sup> It provides a starting point to trace the networks, intermarriages and activities that characterised the community. Family history research, photographs, objects, sites offer further leads.

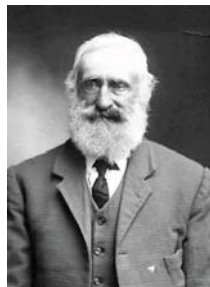


(above left) Herman Hartmann Junior and family, 'Beulah', Dundee, 1899.<sup>10</sup>

(above right) Dray used on 'Beulah' in the early twentieth century. Now in the local museum.<sup>11</sup>



(left) 'Othfresen', Dundee, selected and named by Herman Hartmann Senior in 1874.<sup>12</sup>



(left to right) Johann Kneipp, arrived in Australia in 1855 and settled at Dundee; fob and chain owned by Johann Kneipp and now in the local museum; and Dundee Cemetery where a number of the German settlers are buried.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Eileen Hartmann, *Dundee: The Land and Its People*, Dundee, 1979.

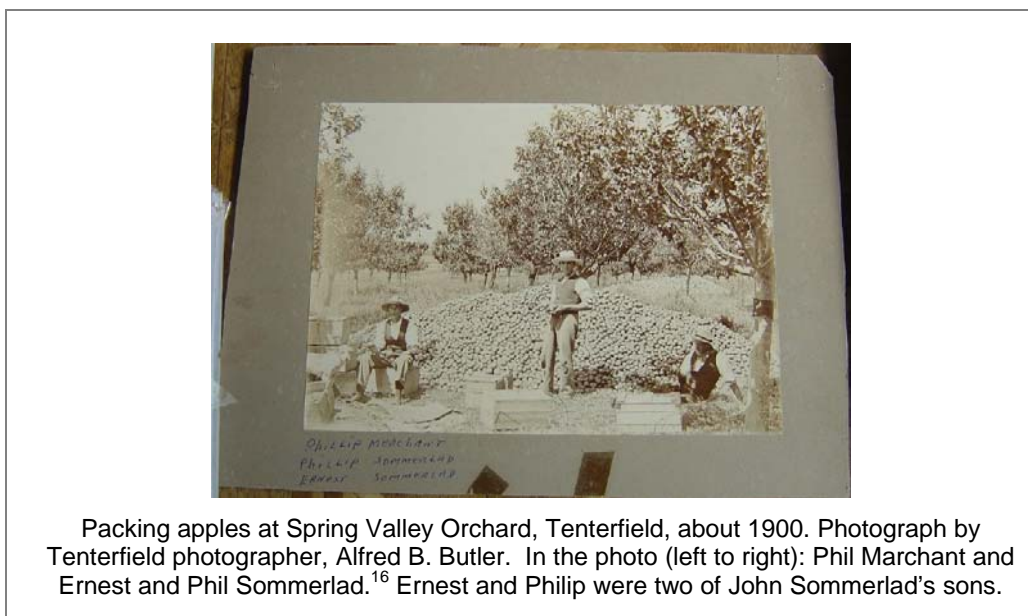
<sup>10</sup> Image and details from Hartmann, p.117.

<sup>11</sup> Land of the Beardies History House Museum.

<sup>12</sup> Hartmann, p.116.

<sup>13</sup> Photo of Johann Kneipp from *Kneipp Family History and Genealogy of Dundee, NSW, Australia*, <http://www.halenet.com.au/~jvbryant/kneipp3.html>; Fob and chain, Land of the Beardies History House Museum.

These free selectors went into mixed farming, orchards and, when possible, added to their acreage. David Fittler, for example, originally acquired fifteen acres of land outside Armidale. He named the property 'Elder Villa' (a play on the name of his home town of Eltville in Germany). By 1885, he had 200 acres. On this he had 'eight horses, six cows, one pig, and was growing wheat, oats, maize and potatoes'.<sup>14</sup> In Tenterfield, John Sommerlad is credited with establishing the first commercial orchard in the district. He initially purchased a block of land and planted an orchard and market garden, and then acquired a property, 'Spring Valley', outside town which he developed into an orchard and nursery.<sup>15</sup>



Packing apples at Spring Valley Orchard, Tenterfield, about 1900. Photograph by Tenterfield photographer, Alfred B. Butler. In the photo (left to right): Phil Marchant and Ernest and Phil Sommerlad.<sup>16</sup> Ernest and Philip were two of John Sommerlad's sons.

Not far away, Andreas and Salome Roos selected and developed the property that became known as 'Boundary Farm'. It was located on the boundary between Clifton and Tenterfield Stations where Andreas Roos had worked as a shepherd. In 1899, the *Tenterfield Star* published an article about the then widowed Salome and the farm. It provides a description of the type of mixed farming that was common to the properties of German – and other – selectors. The article describes a 'vinery, producing splendid clusters of white and black grapes of about twenty varieties', '18 acres of maize ... cobbing well', 'an acre of potatoes, which look well, and in the garden are good marketable cabbages, a few hives of bees, and all sorts of other accessories',

<sup>14</sup> Armidale Family History Group, *Pioneer Register of New England*, Armidale, 2003, p.98.

<sup>15</sup> Norman Crawford, *Tenterfield Star*, 18, 21 and 24 November 1957.

<sup>16</sup> Image and details from Tenterfield Centenary Cottage Museum.

'the cool, high-roofed, stone-floored dairy ... and twice a week butter (handmade) goes to Tenterfield, with fruit and other commodities' and '14 milking cows, and about 86 head of mixed cattle'.<sup>17</sup>

As landowners, the free selectors anchored themselves to the region. They developed their properties, had families, often had to diversify to meet changing circumstances, and a number managed to pass the family farming enterprise down through the next generations.



Four generations of Sommerlads, Tenterfield, 1908. Standing, Catherine Waller (nee Sommerlad), her son Charles and, sitting, Johannes and Louisa Sommerlad with their first great-grandchild, Eric Waller.<sup>18</sup>



Herman and Louisa Hartmann's diamond wedding anniversary with their extended family, 1922.<sup>19</sup>

Herman and Louisa Hartmann were married in Germany and arrived in Australia in 1864. They eventually settled in Dundee where they selected property.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Copy of the article held in the First Families Project files at Tenterfield Pioneer Cottage.

<sup>18</sup> Image and details from E. Lloyd Sommerlad, *The Migrant Shepherd*, Sydney, 1986, p.135.

<sup>19</sup> Image and details from Hartmann, p.222.

<sup>20</sup> Hartmann, pp.219-226.

The pattern was different for Chinese migrants who, until the Second World War, grew and supplied vegetables to their local communities.

## Market gardeners

The growing of fruit and vegetables in the region had its origin in two enterprises: providing food for the residents and workers on pastoral stations, and the planting of vegetable gardens and fruit trees by diggers on the gold and tin fields. In both these enterprises, Chinese migrants played a significant part. They were early employed as market gardeners on pastoral properties, and one of their recognised contributions to the mining communities was the cultivation and supply of fresh vegetables. As a local newspaper reported in 1903 on the tin mining area of Tingha, in the tainted language of the time:

There are about a dozen different almond-eyed market gardeners there and thereabouts 'raking in the shekels' as vendors of welle good wedgetible.<sup>21</sup>

Local knowledge also states that Emmaville's earlier name of Vegetable Creek reflected the Chinese vegetable gardens that characterised the early mining settlement.<sup>22</sup>

Chinese market gardens became distinctive features of towns throughout the Tableland and, indeed, throughout Australia in the late nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries. As Rodney Lancashire argues, Chinese market gardeners made a significant, though largely neglected, contribution to Australian farming during this period. They brought skills and knowledge from China as well as adopting and adapting less familiar practices. Their labour intensive methods of farming, ability to manage and organise their own workforce, and catering for local markets with local produce became distinctive features of their contributions.<sup>23</sup> These same features accommodated their economic and social standing in Australian communities. By working together in an agricultural enterprise which required intensive labour, low capital investment (they usually leased land) and could be

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<sup>21</sup> *Inverell Argus*, 21 April 1903, p.2 quoted in Elizabeth Campbell, *A history of tin mining in the Inverell District 1871-1914*, BAHons, University of New England, 1968, p.50.

<sup>22</sup> Ian Lobsey, *'The Creek': A History of Emmaville and District 1872-1972*, Emmaville, 1972, p.20.

<sup>23</sup> Rodney Lancashire, 'European-Chinese economic interaction: a pre-federation rural Australian setting', *Rural Society*, 10/2, 2000, pp.229-241. See also Warwick Frost, 'Migrants and technological transfer: Chinese farming in Australia, 1850-1920', *Australian Economic History Review*, 42/2, 2002, pp.113-131; and Barry McGowan, 'Chinese market gardens in southern and western New South Wales', *Australian Humanities Review*, 36, July 2005, pp.119-138.



managed among countrymen, they removed themselves from the need to find work with European employers.<sup>24</sup>

All these features can be seen in the scattered evidence remaining of the Chinese market gardens that shaped the landscape at the edges of towns throughout the Tableland from the mid to late nineteenth century through to the Second World War.

Rate books, directories, oral histories, maps, local knowledge, and migration records identify a number of specific Chinese market gardens and market gardeners. In Inverell, for example, there was Hop Shang's gardens down by the suspension bridge on a site part of which in the early twenty-first century was occupied by 'Wong's Fruitologist', a greengrocery business owned by a descendant of Chinese settlers in the district.<sup>25</sup> There was also Sam Sing's gardens. Percy So Quan observed that his father, So Quan (Louie Jung Yuen) was one of the many partners working at Sam Sing's gardens which were located in Byron Street, about one and a half kilometres past the Hong Yuen store.<sup>26</sup> And there was Jimmy Ah Gun who, in seeking permission to visit China in 1902 and be able to return to Australia, stated that he was a gardener and hawker who had been in the Inverell district for about thirty years. In 1902 he had been a tenant of Mr G.A.Cruickshank in Byron Street for over fifteen years.<sup>27</sup> Other Chinese identifying themselves as market gardeners in Inverell included Hop Sing Sue, Jon Hin, and Joy Yee.<sup>28</sup>

The gardens tended to be worked by between five and ten or more men who formed informal partnerships. They leased the land and often lived on or near the market gardens. Their cooperative ways of working meant that partners could be replaced when, for example, one of them wanted to visit or return to China. Importantly, unlike the German migrants, most of these Chinese were men who had left families behind in China. Ties through land ownership or capital investment were not as desirable. For many, their futures and their families' futures lay back in China. Commentary in a 1903 application by Lum Choy of Tenterfield for a Certificate of Exemption from the Dictation Test so that he could visit China captures a sense of these circumstances and the nature of market gardening leases:

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<sup>24</sup> Janis Wilton, *Golden Threads*, Sydney, 2004, pp.29-30.

<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth Wiedemann, *Holding its Own*, Inverell, 1998, p.290.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Percy So Quan, Inverell, 27 March 1990. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>27</sup> NAA (NSW): SP42/1/12: 1912/2179 and 5179.

<sup>28</sup> Applications for registration as enemy aliens during the Second World War. NAA (NSW): SP1732/4, Box 18.



## Immigration Records, National Archives of Australia

The 1901 Immigration Restriction Act was designed to prevent non-Europeans, especially Chinese, from migrating to and settling in Australia. It also regulated the movements of non-Europeans already resident in Australia. It was discriminatory. It did, however, generate a wealth of records that frequently offer the only documentation on some individual Chinese in Australia.<sup>29</sup> It is possible, for example, to uncover details and photographs of specific Chinese market gardeners.

Certificate of Domicile for Jack Sam Lee, 2 February 1904.<sup>30</sup>

The form states that Jack Sam Lee is 38 years old, is Chinese and was born in Canton<sup>31</sup>, is five feet five and a quarter inches in boots, has dark hair, medium build, brown eyes and a scar in his left eyebrow. He arrived in Australia in 1884 and is resident at Walcha where he is a gardener and has a share in a garden. He was due to depart for China on 10 February 1904.

The Certificate is accompanied by photographs and a handprint (see below) as a means to identify Jack Sam Lee should he wish to return to Australia.



<sup>29</sup> For a guide to the records and an overview of the relevant legislation see Paul Jones, *Chinese-Australian Journeys*, Canberra, 2005.

<sup>30</sup> NAA (NSW): ST84/1/0: 1904-31-30.

<sup>31</sup> Most Chinese of the time stated Canton as their place of origin. This was a generic term. Most came from villages in the surrounding region.

... applicant stated that he and a relative have a farm and orchard leased from C.J.Cavanough of Tenterfield. The area is 110 acres and the rental paid is £33 per year. The lease was for six years and will expire in June next. Lum Garr, his partner and relative will carry on during the absence of the applicant and labour will be employed as required and that a lease will be obtained for a further term by his partner on behalf of both partners.<sup>32</sup>

Sam Lee's 1906 application for a Certificate of Exemption from the Dictation Test similarly provides details about market gardening practices. Sam Lee stated that he was born in China in 1848, arrived in Australia in 1877, and had lived in Tingha for fourteen years, in Armidale for three years and Walcha for eleven years. During that time he had worked in tin mining, as a blacksmith and as a gardener. In 1906 he was working as a gardener in Walcha where he stated that he paid an annual lease of £15 for land in Walcha, and that he owned three carts, three horses and harness, and a few gardening implements. His application included a statement signed by sixteen Walcha residents declaring that they were 'well acquainted with Sam Lee of Walcha, Gardener' and that they believed 'he was a bona fide resident of Walcha for the past eleven years'. Sam Lee also declared that he was married, and that his wife and five children all lived in China. His file includes a photograph.<sup>33</sup>

Farming techniques, implements, the vegetables grown, residential accommodation and occasionally the profiles of individuals and their place in local communities emerge from memories of the presence of the Chinese market gardeners.

Quin Chee had market gardens near and in Tenterfield. Local historian Ken Halliday has pieced together Quin Chee's story. He established that Quin Chee appeared in the Tenterfield district in the late 1880s. He initially had a market garden at Bolivia, about thirty kilometres south of Tenterfield. From here, he hawked his goods to miners and residents in the district. In 1902 he moved to Logan Street, Tenterfield, where he set up a market garden. He worked the garden until 1933 when the property was sold. In 1934 local residents collected money to pay for him to return to China.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Lum Choy, Application for certificate for exemption from the Dictation Test, 1903. NAA (NSW): SP42/1 Box 2: 1903/9943/1163.

<sup>33</sup> Sam Lee, Application for certificate of exemption from the Dictation Test, 1906. NAA(NSW): SP42/1/6: 1906/396

<sup>34</sup> Ken Halliday, *Tenterfield Reflections*, Tenterfield, 1981, p.4-6.



Quin Chee with his horse and cart, undated.<sup>35</sup>

Quin Chee is remembered as a generous man who gave regularly to the local hospital, and as a very good gardener. In 1990 Mrs Dulcie Rose recalled:

Now he had his market garden when we were young people, down there in Logan Street, just where Mr and Mrs Chorley now live. And he really was a very good gardener. And he used to come out amongst the...people on the land, with his cart covered by a big canopy and all his stuff in it, you know, clothes hanging around the side and vegetables inside.<sup>36</sup>

Tom Manuel recalled the gardens on his father's property near Emmaville during the 1920s and 1930s:

Very neat, very neat beds ... Their system of watering: they'd get two huge cans of water and they had narrow paths in between the beds so that they could walk up one and they'd water half the bed on each side, you see. Oh he [Cum Day] used to have pumpkin, carrot, lettuce, radish, melons. You know, all the temperate vegetables that you can grow here. It was a very neat garden. And I remember that it was more or less contoured ... conserving moisture.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Reproduced in Allan Barratt, *Deepwater School 1884-1984*, Deepwater, 1984, p.16.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Maisie Petrie and Dulcie Rose, Tenterfield, 5 May 1990. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Tom Manuel, Glen Innes, 10 May 1990. Chinese in New England Project.

Robert Duck Chong recalled Billy Long's garden in Tingha as

...round about half an acre and he had a horse and cart on which he delivered his goods. ... Mostly European vegetables. He would have certain Chinese vegetables because there were a few Chinese about the place.<sup>38</sup>

Marie Hunnam remembered Tingha in the 1940s:

There was a market garden next to the joss house – worked by a very old fashioned looking Chinese, using a square ended hoe, carried water on his shoulders and used to scoop it out with a tin with holes which he'd then sprinkle over the garden. He had about half an acre.

JW: Where did he live?

In a house on the garden. A nice, clean house.<sup>39</sup>

By the Second World War, the Chinese market gardens belonged to local memory. The gardeners had died, returned to China or moved to other occupations. The sites of their gardens have been built on, cleared or, if left alone, are marked by the contours and remnants familiar to archaeologists. By contrast, the sites of some of the tobacco farms which had also attracted Chinese labour from the late nineteenth century contain clearer tangible evidence of their presence and of the labour of Chinese and later immigrants. They also provide evidence of the ways in which immigrants were required to diversify as agricultural opportunities changed.

### **Tobacco farmers**

Around Ashford, Bonshaw and Mingoola there are still standing a number of the timber tobacco barns which are attributed to the labour of Chinese migrants and, near them, the cement barns of the second half of the twentieth century that are associated with later immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds, especially Italians.

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Robert Duck Chong, Sydney, 26 April 1991 and 5 July 1991. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Marie Hunnam, Mudgereeba, 25 September 1991. Chinese in New England Project.



Wooden and cement tobacco barns, Mingoola/Bonshaw area, late 1980s.<sup>40</sup>

From the 1870s, there were experiments in tobacco farming in the areas around Ashford, Bonshaw and Mingoola and spreading across the border into southern Queensland. Elizabeth Wiedemann argues, for example, that, from 1904 to 1919, tobacco was the most significant agricultural product for Ashford and played an important part in seeing an increase in the population of the town and its surrounding district.<sup>41</sup> Jeane Upjohn similarly observes that it was the presence of tobacco farmers' children that caused the opening of the Texas School in 1887, attracting children from both the New South Wales and Queensland side of the river.<sup>42</sup> Both local historians also point to the important role played by Chinese labour in the development of the industry at this stage. Local residents also recall the Chinese contribution.

Robert Duck Chong remembered that his father, Charles Duck Chong, spent time sharefarming tobacco around Ashford in about 1909:

... as sharefarmers they were supplied with the basics such as housing, food such as meat which was charged to their account until the crop was sold and then the proceeds would be divided according to agreement.<sup>43</sup>

Lawrence Ping Kee remembered that there were still a number of Chinese working the tobacco around Texas in the 1930s, and, in correspondence records from the Hong Yuen store in Inverell, the owner of the store, Harry

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<sup>40</sup> Image from Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>41</sup> Wiedemann, *Holding its Own*, p.217.

<sup>42</sup> Jeane Upjohn, *The Tobacco Growers of Southern Queensland, Texas*, 1999, p.12.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Robert Duck Chong.

Fay, noted in the early 1930s that he had a sixty acre tobacco farm employing '15 Australians and 6 Chinese'.<sup>44</sup>

Wiedemann's description of the work involved emphasises its labour intensive nature:

Everything was done by hand. The seedlings being watered with watering cans that were carried on a yoke over the shoulders. The Chinese got the water from wells. When the seedlings were planted every one was watered individually and protected from the sun with grass. While the crop was growing the weeds had to be constantly chipped, and then at harvest time the whole plant was cut off at the ground and the stem split and hung over poles. The leaves were dried in tall open sheds.<sup>45</sup>

By the time of the Second World War, most of the Chinese sharefarmers had moved on. As well, by the late 1940s, tobacco production across Australia had stalled. Then, in the 1950s, there was a rapid expansion in the tobacco industry. The dominant tobacco producing areas in Australia were around Mareeba in north Queensland and Myrtleford in Victoria. The third area, important although with a smaller production than the other two areas, was in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland.<sup>46</sup> Here, the area under tobacco cultivation increased from just under 200 hectares in 1950 to just under 1200 hectares in 1960. There was then a slump which saw the area reduced to about 700 hectares in 1966 followed by an upward swing which took the area under cultivation to over 1200 hectares by 1970.<sup>47</sup>

This growth in the industry was accompanied by a change in the size and profile of the population. Tobacco farming – like sugar cane, vegetables, fruit and horticulture – with its labour intensive methods and the opportunity to farm without needing to purchase land, attracted immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds, especially Italians. They, like their Chinese predecessors, became sharefarmers. The landowner owned the tobacco quota (allocated under government arrangements), the land, the buildings, and most of the equipment; the sharefarmer usually provided the 'variable costs' (things 'like fertiliser, seed, fuel, casual labour'), lived rent-free on the

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with Lawrence Ping Kee, Moree, 26 March 1990. Chinese in New England Project; and Harry Fay to Secretary, Department of the Interior, undated (about 1933). 1933. Mar Papers.

<sup>45</sup> Wiedemann, *Holding its Own*, p.36.

<sup>46</sup> Maris E. Buchanan, 'Responses to agricultural change: a study of tobacco growing in southern Queensland and northern New South Wales', *New England Monographs in Geography*, 3, 1975, pp.23-24.

<sup>47</sup> Buchanan, 'Responses to agricultural change', p.27.

property and, as rent, paid the landowner a percentage of the gross returns from the crop.<sup>48</sup>

Census figures indicate the increased number of Italians and the way their numbers fluctuated in line with fluctuations in tobacco production. In the rural districts around Tenterfield, for example, the 1954 census recorded 37 residents born in Italy, in 1961 it was 100, in 1966 it was 52, in 1971 it was 79, and in 1981 it was 51.

There were patterns to the Italian presence. Generally, the men came first, attracting relatives and *paesani* (fellow villagers) to join them and eventually bringing wives and children. Working and living conditions, at least initially, were basic and demanding. In the mid 1980s tobacco farmers and their families from around Mingoola and Bonshaw shared memories of these early years.

When Dad went there [to the tobacco], he had to clear the land himself. All by hand. No dozers, no nothing. Dig round trees till they fell over with pick and shovel ... and they built their own irrigation. They'd just build trestles and lay half of a galvanized pipe, round pipes about a foot in diameter on the trestles so that the water would run downhill to get to the paddocks.<sup>49</sup>

...to cure tobacco you had to build your own barns. The owners only provided the cement. You had to go to the river with a wheelbarrow or if you had a truck, to get some water from the river.<sup>50</sup>

Everything was done by hand. *Tutto a mano*. Water was brought up by hand for the tobacco plants and for washing.

And it was spraying with the knapsack on the back and most of the time when you were spraying, the wind blew the poison back at you. Some people got very sick from the poisons.<sup>51</sup>

The barns used to be fired by wood. You'd first cut it in the bush then we'd queue up all night, in our swimmers, just looking after the barns.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Buchanan, 'Responses to agricultural change', p. 38.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Amleto, Antonietta and Enzo Gianoli, Mingoola, 19 August 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Tony and Norina De Stefani, Reedy Creek, 15 and 17 August 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Oreste Marcuzzi, 2 December 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Tony De Stefani.

They'd pick during the day and work all night, just looking after their barns.

It was long hours. The worst part was curing the tobacco. Then we did it with wood fires. Every half hour, every quarter hour, we had to keep it at the right temperature.<sup>53</sup>



Joe Micallef watering tobacco seedbeds on a property near Texas, Queensland, about 1958.<sup>54</sup>

Born in Malta, Joe Micallef came to Australia in 1954. After working on a market garden in Sydney for a couple of years, he worked tobacco in and around Texas, Queensland, before moving to the Bonshaw/Mingoola area.<sup>55</sup>

Tobacco farming, like all farming, was subject to the caprices of the weather: hailstorms destroyed crops, and floods and droughts reduced productivity. It was also subject to oversupply and changing markets. In the 1950s, for example, the rapid expansion of tobacco growing saw farms established on unsuitable soil, a reduction in the quality of the tobacco, an oversupply of the tobacco, and a fall in the price and value of the product.<sup>56</sup> The joint federal and state governments' response was to set up, in 1965, a 'Tobacco Industry Stabilisation Plan' which aimed to 'provide growers with an assured market, whilst protecting manufacturers from any further over-rapid and indiscriminate expansion of the local growing industry'.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Interview with Oreste Marcuzzi.

<sup>54</sup> Courtesy of Joe Micallef.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Joe Micallef, Mingoola, 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>56</sup> Buchanan, p.34; Peter Griggs, 'Changing rural spaces: deregulation and the decline of tobacco farming in the Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Area, Far North Queensland', *Australian Geographer*, 33/1, 2002, pp.45-46.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Griggs, p.47.



The Australian Tobacco Board was established, federal and state legislation passed, and a series of regulations imposed which remained essentially in place for the next thirty years. Existing tobacco growers were allocated a quota based on their previous seasons, the transfer and acquisition of quotas was strictly controlled, and local manufacturers were required to have a fifty percent usage of locally grown tobacco.<sup>58</sup>

In New South Wales, a Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board was established to administer the quota and the three producers' representatives on the original board (Richard Southam, Albert Stranieri and George Warner) came from the Tenterfield/Ashford district.<sup>59</sup> While ensuring a farmer's income provided the sufficient quantity of tobacco was produced, the system protected the industry from changing market forces in such a way that it was unprepared for the changes which confronted it from the late 1970s.<sup>60</sup>

The success of anti-smoking campaigns and the government imposed increases on the price of tobacco products heralded changes in the market and in attitudes. There was lobbying about the level of government support given to tobacco farmers, and, over the next twenty five years, the protective regulations for the industry were dismantled. The impact is indicated in the decline in the overall number of tobacco quota holders in New South Wales over this period from sixty-five in 1983 to twenty-five in 1993.<sup>61</sup> The deregulation and closing down of the industry climaxed, in New South Wales, with the state government paying remaining tobacco growers to leave the industry during 1994 and 1995.<sup>62</sup>

The impact of regulation and deregulation is clearly reflected in the developments in the tobacco growing areas around Ashford, Bonshaw and Mingoola. By this time, a number of the Italian-born sharefarmers had become the owner-operators of smaller tobacco farms<sup>63</sup> and, as such, were more anchored to the locality. Unlike the sharefarmers who, as tobacco production decreased, moved elsewhere to find work, the owner-operators had to try to meet their quotas, survive the unpredictability of the weather, find the money to meet increasing costs of tobacco farming and, in the end,

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<sup>58</sup> Griggs, p.48.

<sup>59</sup> Agency detail entry for Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board, *Archives Investigator*, State Records Authority of NSW.  
<http://investigator.records.nsw.gov.au/Entity.aspx?Path=\Agency\2072> (accessed November 2008)

<sup>60</sup> Griggs, p.48.

<sup>61</sup> Griggs, p.49.

<sup>62</sup> Griggs, p.50.

<sup>63</sup> Buchanan, p.105.

diversify. In the mid to late 1980s the predicaments of the tobacco farmers along the Queensland border were captured in comments they made on the state of their industry:

In the 1950s it was 100% better than today. More money, better life. With money, you can employ someone to do the work, not like today.<sup>64</sup>

Now it means a high investment before you start. About \$20,000 in poisons, irrigation, fertilizer, fuels and you risk getting nothing if the weather is bad.<sup>65</sup>

Our farm is viable because we are planting vegies and lucerne.

We've tried different things. This year [1983] we planted oats but the grass has grown faster than the oats and, anyway, the kangaroos have gotten in and eaten the lot.

In Italy, my Dad still has his farm – seven cows, a few olive trees, a few orange trees, a couple of pigs, a couple of goats ... That's not possible here. There aren't enough people and, anyway, everything is too controlled. For example, last year I had lots of eggs. One man was buying them but he was warned to stop by the Egg Board.

Those who say they are doing well from tobacco have had good seasons. We just haven't had any good seasons. In nine years, only two good seasons.

By 2007, the tobacco farms were all converted to other crops and mixed farming, including vineyards.

## **Wine growers**

Wine growing was another agricultural pursuit that attracted some immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Unlike market gardening and tobacco farming which primarily brought unskilled and semi-skilled immigrants with little or no capital, wine growing required those with more capital and connections.

Grapevines were brought into the region in the early 1850s by Frank Wyndham from his family wine growing enterprise at Dalwood in the Hunter

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Oreste Marcuzzi.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Rosario Policaro, Mingoola, 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

Valley.<sup>66</sup> Others followed his example and, among them, were the German born brothers, Christian and Jacob Seitz who established the 'Emminthal vineyard' which had been selected in 1866 at Bukkulla.<sup>67</sup> There was also French-born medical practitioner, Louis Segol, who established the Beaulieu vineyard near Inverell in 1877.<sup>68</sup> He employed a Swiss born vigneron, Edward Clottu, who had worked as a winemaker in Victoria and elsewhere in New South Wales before joining the Beaulieu vineyard.<sup>69</sup> The vineyard was acquired in 1885 by Joel Barrett and continued to operate as a winery until after World War One when the property was given over to soldier settlement. The buildings, however, survived. In 1968 Philippa Whish noted:

The winery is still in existence and is of slab construction, about 60 feet long with an earthen cellar underneath. Hand made bricks which housed the still are still present and in the cellar the adzed logs on which the casks rested can be seen.<sup>70</sup>



Segol's winery at Gum Flat, undated, possibly 1970s.<sup>71</sup>

Further south, at Hillgrove near Uralla, German-born Theodore Bauer established a vineyard in the late nineteenth century. A local entrepreneur who had been involved with a wine shop, fruit shop, boarding house and a gold mining company, his grapes won prizes at the local show in 1903 and, in the same year he was reported as extending the area under cultivation. By

<sup>66</sup> Walker, *Old New England*, p.69.

<sup>67</sup> Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, p.254.

<sup>68</sup> Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, p.254.

<sup>69</sup> Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, p.250.

<sup>70</sup> Philippa Whish, 'Wine growing in the Inverell district', *Tide of Time* (Inverell and District Historical Society), 2, June 1968, p.29.

<sup>71</sup> UNE Heritage Centre and Regional Archives Photograph Collection: RCP8051.

1910, however, the enterprise had faltered.<sup>72</sup> Travelling photographer, Joseph Check, had captured the vineyard at its height in 1908.



Bauer's Cremorne Gardens (vineyard), Hillgrove, 1908. Photographed by Joseph Check.<sup>73</sup> The shadow of the photographer and his assistant can be viewed in the bottom left hand corner.

Wine growing in the district went into a slump from around World War One but revived in the late twentieth century. And, again, settlers from non-English-speaking backgrounds are among the small number in the industry. Of the thirteen wineries and vineyards listed for the New England Tablelands in 2007 three were established by immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds.<sup>74</sup> The longest established is the Reedy Creek Estate near Bonshaw. Owned by the De Stefani family, they took to viticulture as a replacement for the tobacco farming which had first anchored them to the locality and which, by the 1980s, was dying out as a viable livelihood. Today they are growing seventeen acres of grapes which are processed in the onsite winery, and their cellar offers nine varieties/blends of wine. Their promotional material proudly advertises their Italian origins.<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, the more recently established Dumaresq Valley Estate, tells the story of the Italian-born Zappa brothers who first came to the district as tobacco pickers and then tobacco sharefarmers before purchasing their first

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<sup>72</sup> *Uralla and Walcha Times*, 29 May 1879, 27 May 1885; *Armidale Express*, 12 July 1889; *Hillgrove Guardian*, 28 February 1903; *Armidale Chronicle*, 23 April 1903 and 22 October 1910.

<sup>73</sup> UNE Heritage Centre and Regional Archives: HRCP7081

<sup>74</sup> Wineries and vineyards in Australia - New England', *WineDiva*, <http://www.winediva.com.au/wineries/new-england.asp>.

<sup>75</sup> *Reedy Creek Estate*, <http://www.reedycreekwines.com.au/>.

property, named Saliat (after their home region in northern Italy) in 1968. In 1972 they purchased the neighbouring property, Newfarm. In 2007, the combined property covered 4,000 acres and had '120 head of cattle, 5000 head of superfine wool merino sheep, ... 450 acres of fresh produce and approximately 600 acres of cereal crops' as well as the 50 acre vineyard which was established in 1997 under the name Dumaresq Valley Vineyard.<sup>76</sup> The third vineyard, Richfield Estate, produced its first vintage in 2000. The website emphasises its French connections and flavours: the French-born owner, Bernard Forey; winemaker, John Cassegrain, as the child of French migrants; and an emphasis on the French nature of the wines being produced.

They are pursuing a winemaking tradition more akin to the French than the Australian, with less emphasis on fruit character and more on complexity and an easy drinking style.<sup>77</sup>

## **Alternative farming**

The late twentieth century has seen another type of diversification in farming on the Tableland. As traditional markets have gone into crisis and as environmental issues and concerns about climate change have influenced ideas about farming and farming futures, old and new farms have experimented with alternative farming techniques and products. As well, the number of lifestyle or hobby farms has increased. Here people experience their forms of tree change and opt for a touch of rural life. Among all these, are some immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds who have seen the Tableland as the haven they are seeking.

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<sup>76</sup> *Dumaresq Valley Vineyard*, <http://www.dumaresqvalleyvineyard.com.au/Pages/frames.html>

<sup>77</sup> *Richfield Estate*, <http://www.richfieldvineyard.com.au/>

## MAKING AND SELLING

As populations grew and towns and villages developed, there were commercial opportunities for enterprising migrants and settlers, including those from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The businesses that they established, developed, owned and staffed included a variety of shops, trades, cafés, restaurants, hotels, cinemas, bakeries, and small manufacturing and processing plants. Some did so as individuals, others as parts of patterns relating to particular ethnic groups.

### German tradesmen and proprietors

Early German settlers in the region, many of whom were originally brought as labourers for the pastoral properties, became prominent in trades and small manufacturing. They set up business in the towns as saddlers, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, bakers, millers, and jewellers.

Some surviving buildings with signage hint at their presence. In Tenterfield, there is 'Kneipp. Established 1892. Saddle and Harness Emporium' and in Glen Innes there is 'A. Meyer's Bakery' and 'Schmidt Jewellers'.<sup>1</sup>



Kneipp saddler building, Rouse Street, Tenterfield and A. Meyer's building, Grey Street, Glen Innes, October 2007.

Records and local knowledge reveal more. A focus on the towns of Tenterfield, Glen Innes and Armidale provides the following initial lists of German-born migrants and their occupations and businesses, and indicates

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on these and other businesses and individuals browse the *Different Sights* online database.

the diverse areas in which they worked while highlighting their contributions particularly to trades and light manufacturing and processing.

In Tenterfield, there was Imberger's saw mill and Joseph Schiffmann's Excelsior Saddlery Depot. There was also wheelwright Charles Leis who, in 1881 acquired the Terminus Hotel; undertaker, cabinetmaker and builder Jacob Heiss; wheelwright and coachbuilder Ernest Kuskey; and saddler Charles Pavel who was the first owner of the Tenterfield Saddlery, a building and business now best known for its association with singer Peter Allen and immortalised in his song 'Tenterfield Saddler'.

In Glen Innes, there was Gottfried Manthey and Sons Coach and Buggy Factory; saddle and harness maker Rudolph Frauenfelder; butcher Frederick Kiefer; Von Klitzing's Furniture Arcade; Otto Juergens, publican of the Royal Hotel and, subsequently, of the Deepwater Hotel; saddler Henry Zahner; and J.F. Utz who established the Utz Store and Flour Mill.

In Armidale, there was A.J. Zehner's coach factory; butchers Jacob Kiefer and George Kiefer and Sons; Bernard Herzog's cordial factory and brewery; Carl Joseph Hirschberg's cabinetmaking, joinery and undertaking business; shoemakers Wilhelm Dill and David Fittler; cabinet maker Friedrich Eiskemp; and John F. Schmidt's 'tin and galvanized iron works'.

There were patterns. Some businesses were shortlived. A number changed locations within the one town; some relocated to another town. Some diversified. A number passed from German-born fathers to sons and to grandsons. And, for some of the German-born founders, success in business provided the standing and recognition that saw them entering local civic life.

Advertisements, photographs and objects provide one means of tracking these patterns for individual businesses. Carl Hirschberg's cabinet making, joinery and undertaking enterprise, for example, was located in various premises in Armidale. In 1859, advertising as a furniture maker, the location was 'near the Royal Hotel'; in 1863 he had a showroom opposite the 'Wellington Inn' (now Tattersalls Hotel); in 1868 he had relocated next to the Australian Joint Stock Bank; in 1875 he had moved his premises in Beardy Street to a shop opposite the Court House; in 1890, he was in Falconer (sic) Street, next to the Bank of New South Wales and was also advertising that, for the undertaking business, C. J. Hirschberg and Son had acquired the 'art of modern embalming'. Hirschberg died in 1910. Four years later, it was

announced that a competent manager had been engaged for the business and that it had relocated to the 'old address at Falconer (sic) St'.<sup>2</sup>



Carl Hirschberg's cabinet maker's shop, Armidale, 1870s. The signage reads 'C.J. Hirschberg cabinetmaker, joiner, upholsterer and undertaker'.<sup>3</sup>

In his local history, *Colonial Armidale*, John Ferry notes that the shop was built to Hirschberg's specifications. He draws attention to 'a distinctly German air' about the 'shop's jerkin-head gable'.<sup>4</sup>



Advertisement in *Armidale Express*, 16 April 1897.<sup>5</sup>

In Tenterfield, Frederick Ernst Kuskey established his wheelwright business in 1867 and remained active in the business until his death in 1909. Two of his sons, Fred and Walter, also became involved with the business.<sup>6</sup> Photographs

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<sup>2</sup> *Armidale Express*, 29 January 1859, 16 May 1863, 18 October 1868, 26 February 1875, 11 November 1890.

<sup>3</sup> Reproduced in John Ferry, *Colonial Armidale*, Brisbane, 1999, illustration pages. Original courtesy of Bruce Cady.

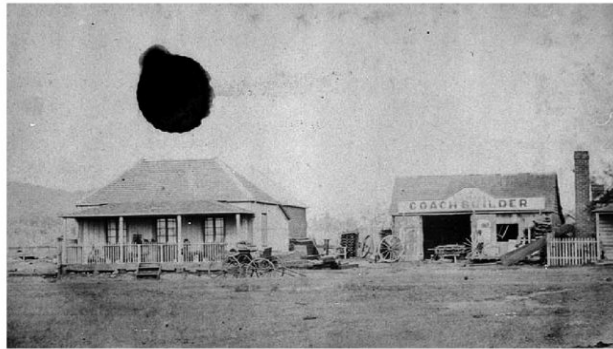
<sup>4</sup> Ferry, *Colonial Armidale*, illustration pages.

<sup>5</sup> Reproduced in R.B.Walker, *Old New England*, Sydney, 1966, opposite p.118.

<sup>6</sup> *Tenterfield Star*, 23 April 1909.



document changes in the building and the proprietors, and provide a sense of the work environment. The building itself survived into the twenty first century. Its latest and last use was as Grogan's Welding Works. It was demolished sometime in 2006.<sup>7</sup> The doors from the building, etched with branding marks from over the years, were donated to Tenterfield Centenary Cottage Museum.



Kuskey's blacksmith shop and coachbuilding works, High Street, Tenterfield, about 1870.<sup>8</sup>



(Left) The business under the management of Ernst Kuskey, the signage reads, 'E.Kuskey. Coach builder. Established 1867. General wheelwright and agricultural implement maker'. (Right) Under the management of son, Walter Kuskey. The signage reads 'Established 1867. W. Kuskey. Coach works. Coachpainter & trimmer'.<sup>9</sup>

In the the first two photographs, the chimney of the adjoining house can be be seen. In the third photograph it is obscured by the tree. Also note the changed roof line, although the bottom part of the building looks the same.

<sup>7</sup> *Tenterfield Star*, November 1968; and undated newspaper clippings, Tenterfield Centenary Cottage; and Ken Halliday, email, 21 March 2009.

<sup>8</sup> State Library of NSW: At work and play 06810.

<sup>9</sup> Images and captions from Tenterfield Centenary Cottage Museum.

Extant buildings also provide evidence of the enterprise of some of the early German settlers. In Glen Innes, for example, there are two imposing buildings originally constructed for J.F. (Fred) Utz: a large store on the corner of Grey and Bourke Streets, and a former flour mill in Bourke Street.



Local history research has established that Utz came to Australia at around the age of fifteen to join his mother and stepfather. Utz spent a couple of years delivering rations to shepherds on Rangers Valley Station where his stepfather worked. He then moved to nearby Dundee Station and managed the station store. Over the next few years, he established his own store in Dundee township, held the licence for the local hotel and was buying wool and tin from local residents. In 1878, he sold his business in Dundee and, with his second wife, travelled to Europe. On his return two years later, he purchased what was then the Glen Innes Store and surrounding property. He had the three storey flour mill built in Bourke Street and, a little later, replaced the existing store with the building that still stands on the site today. When Utz retired to Sydney in the late 1890s, he transferred the businesses to his sons.

<sup>10</sup> University of New England Heritage Centre and Regional Archives: HRCP 1331.

<sup>11</sup> Reproduced in E.C. Sommerlad and Eve St Clair Cameron, *The Beardies Heritage*, Glen Innes, 1972, p.146.

In 1912/1913, the store was bought by M.C. Mackenzie and the mill was floated as a limited liability company, changing its name to the Sunlight Flour Milling Company.<sup>12</sup>

Small and not so small business enterprises in self-employed trades and commercial ventures clearly characterised patterns of settlement and work by many of those nineteenth century German migrants on the Tableland who did not join the free selectors and try their hands at establishing their own farms.

Among twentieth century settlers from Germany, some have continued to find employment as skilled tradespeople and in small entrepreneurial and commercial ventures. In Deepwater, for example, Carl Wilhelm Baer operated a bakery in the 1920s and in the 1930s was supplying ice and cordials. He is also credited with building the Eclipse Theatre and the home adjacent to the theatre.<sup>13</sup>



Eclipse Theatre building, Deepwater, October 2007.

In Tenterfield, Karl Pieper and his wife, Clare, arrived from Germany in the 1950s. They came as assisted migrants. Karl was a watchmaker. He worked for local jeweller and watchmaker Geoff Windridge, eventually purchasing the business and renaming it 'Pieper's Watchmakers and Jewellers'.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Eileen Hartmann, *Dunde: The Land and Its People*, Dundee, 1979, pp.208-209; A.W. Cameron, 'Early Glen Innes', *Land of the Beardies History House Bulletin*, 10/4, December 1982, pp.12-16; A.W. Cameron, 'Flour mills in the Glen Innes district', *Land of the Beardies History House Bulletin*, 19/2, 1991, pp.32-36; and Sommerlad and Cameron, *The Beardies Heritage*, pp.145-147 and 301.

<sup>13</sup> Eve Chappell, 'Carl Wilhelm Baer', *Land of the Beardies History House Bulletin*, 23/2, December 1995, pp.27-31.

<sup>14</sup> Janis Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: The Pieper Letters - Tenterfield in the 50s*, Armidale, 1988.

### Letters: Writing home to Germany

From 1955 to 1960, Clare (and occasionally Karl) Pieper wrote to their parents in their home town of Telgte in Westphalia, Germany.<sup>15</sup> They described the Camp at Greta where they first stayed, the journey north to Tenterfield, and life in Tenterfield - daily routines, food, accommodation, people, climate, the birth of children, Karl's work.

The following excerpts are telling Clare's parents about Karl's success in finding a good job.

Clare to parents

Greta, 13.4.55

...this very day Karl has been given a job. He was nearly the last one of our transport to get a job because he came as the only one of his profession. Now we shall be moving by train to Tenterfield, where Karl will be working in a workshop. His salary will be seventeen pounds five shillings (one hundred and seventy five *deutschmark*) a week, from which amount we will have to pay eight pounds for the hostel for the two of us. ... Isn't this wonderful? What a good thing that Karl brought his complete workshop equipment, because the watchmaker in Tenterfield asked for a revolving chair and a cleansing machine. He even wanted to know the name of the manufacturer.

Clare to parents

Tenterfield 26.7.55

You could nearly say Karl works freelance, he can do whatever he wants to. His basic salary is eighteen pounds ten shillings per week. On top of that he gets another ten pounds from Mr Windridge's pocket. For these more than two hundred and eighty *deutschmark* a week, Karl would have to work a whole month in Münster.



(Left) Clare Pieper writing letters home to Germany while at Greta Camp, 1955. (Right) Karl Pieper doing watch repairs at Greta Camp, 1955.

<sup>15</sup> A selection of excerpts from the letters along with photographs and oral history material is available in Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: The Pieper Letters*. Excerpts and photographs courtesy of Clare Pieper.

## Chinese storekeepers

Alongside the relatively early presence of German tradesmen and their businesses, were Chinese owned stores. They first appeared on the gold and then later the tin fields, and in the towns which developed to service the mining populations. They provided supplies for their countrymen and then, as populations dwindled and some Chinese storekeepers remained, their customers extended to include the wider local population. Ernest Sue Fong captured this pattern when he recalled how his father, George Sue Fong, established his store in the tin mining town of Emmaville:

Dad used to work the tin during the day and at night he made his house into a little shop, selling vegetables from his garden out the back, mainly to other Chinese. ... From the house Dad moved into a small shop and he began working in the shop full-time. It was a mixed business and slowly it grew. By 1926 when it was at its height, there were about ten employees working there and the customers were no longer mainly Chinese because most of the Chinese had gone away by then. The business became known as Sue Fong and Sons.<sup>16</sup>

Stores were also established by Chinese migrants in the larger towns so that, by the turn of the century in Inverell, for example, there were general stores operating under the names of F. Mon How, Hong Yuen, Kong How Loong, Kwong Hing, and Sun Sun Tong.<sup>17</sup>

A measure of their success as well as a measure of attitudes to the Chinese at the time, was a campaign in 1903 and 1904 by the NSW Country Storekeepers and other associations to restrict the trading hours and enterprise of Chinese country stores. The campaign was orchestrated from Sydney but had its New England spokespeople. It was argued that, through illegal and devious means, Chinese storekeepers were gaining 'unfair advantages' and were stealing the trade of 'white' storekeepers. The Chinese stayed open after hours, paid below average wages, defrauded the government by keeping their books in Chinese and, to cut costs, were prepared to live 'on a scale abhorrent to a white man'.<sup>18</sup> There were dissenting local voices. An editorial in the *Glen Innes Guardian*, for example,

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<sup>16</sup> Janis Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Hong Yuen – A Country Store and its People*, Armidale, 1988, p. 47.

<sup>17</sup> *Inverell Times*, 20 December 1899, 4, 20 and 21 July 1900, 7 January and 21 December 1903; Elizabeth Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, Inverell, 1981, p. 106; and Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Hong Yuen*.

<sup>18</sup> Janis Wilton, *Chinese voices, Australian lives*, PhD thesis, University of New England, 1996, pp.98-102.

praised the 'many thoroughly reputable Chinese and Asiatic merchants' and argued that the most that should happen is some regulation of trading conditions.<sup>19</sup>

By the time of the 1903/1904 campaign, most if not all towns and villages on the Tableland had at least one Chinese owned general store or mixed business. And, throughout the first half of the twentieth century, new stores were established.<sup>20</sup> They provided one of the means for sponsoring new arrivals from China. This was the era of the 'White Australia policy' when, under the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, only certain non-Europeans were able to get permission to come to Australia. Among those eligible were people sponsored as shop assistants. A requirement was that a store had to have certain levels of import/export business and, from 1934, had to have specific levels of turnover.<sup>21</sup> This, along with the desire for financial success through expansion, triggered the creation of a number of new stores. Among the new stores established after 1901 were, for example, Busy Bee Grocery Store, O Chee Grocers, Sun On, and W. Warley in Glen Innes; Fay's Cash and Carry, Fong Lee, George Kue's mixed business, and Yee's Fruit Depot in Inverell; and Hop Sing, L.C. Garr, Manwar and Loy, and Sun Sun in Tenterfield.<sup>22</sup>

Some of the stores became landmark buildings and businesses in their towns. They expanded, renovated, and adapted as building and shopping styles altered. As well their owners and their families became respected members of their local communities, active in cultural, sporting and social affairs and applauded for their achievements.

Kwong Sing and Company in Glen Innes and the Hong Yuen store in Inverell provide examples of the evolution of stores from simple, late nineteenth century general stores to impressive two storeyed department stores.

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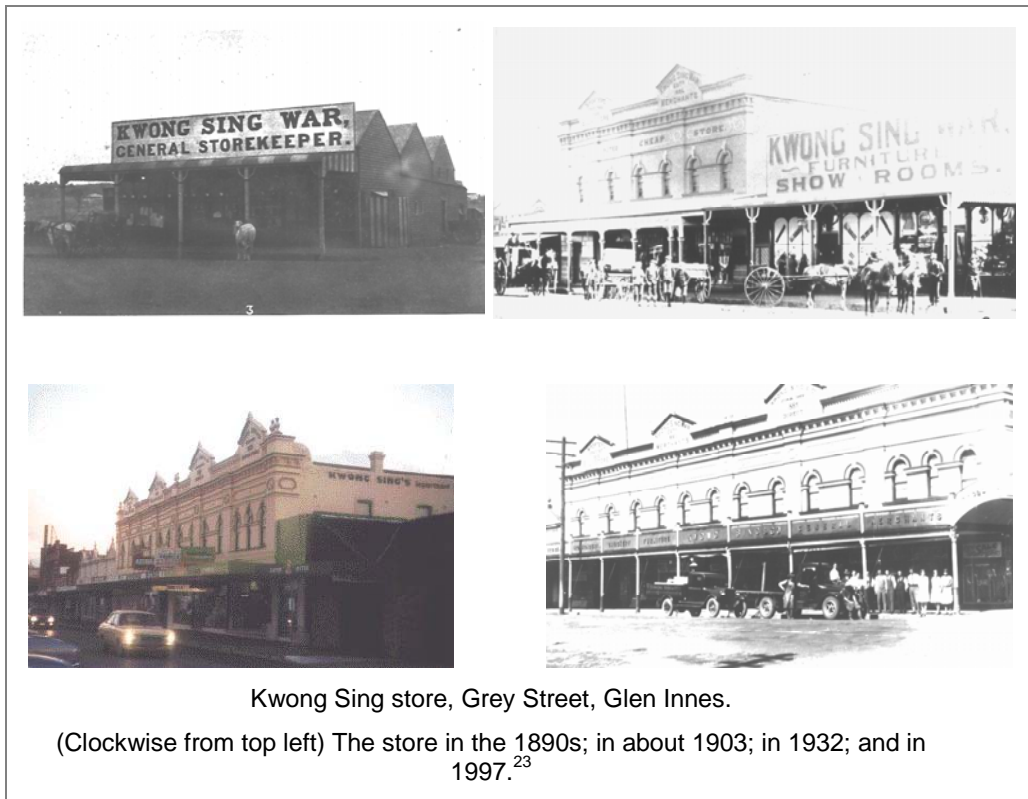
<sup>19</sup> *Glen Innes Guardian*, 23 September 1904.

<sup>20</sup> Wilton, Chinese voices, Australian lives, pp. 327-331. provides a list. See also *Different Sights* online database.

<sup>21</sup> Wilton, Chinese voices, Australian lives, pp. 96-98 and 120-125. See also Janis Wilton, 'Chinese stores in rural Australia' in Kerrie Macpherson (ed.), *The Asian Department Store*, Richmond, Surrey, 1998, pp. 90-113.

<sup>22</sup> Wilton, Chinese voices, Australian lives, pp.117-120 and 327-333.





On a less grand scale, the changes made by the Hon family to their store, Sun Sun and Company in Tenterfield, similarly track the history of the store. It started as a general store in a new 1920s building, was downsized as the family sold some sections, underwent reconstruction during the 1960s (the building is still there), and was finally sold as children and grandchildren moved into new occupations.<sup>24</sup>

These were family stores. They provided employment for immediate and extended family members and often also for people from the same village in China.<sup>25</sup> Over time, as the second and third generations moved into occupations other than storekeeping and as shopping itself changed due partly to improved transport and communications and especially to the arrival of chain stores and big supermarkets, most of the Chinese owned stores disappeared. By the twenty first century, only a small number have survived and they have diversified. The Kwong Sing store in Glen Innes is now leased

<sup>23</sup> Courtesy Harvey Young, Glen Innes.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Dulcie Hon, Sydney, 8 July and 17 September 1992. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>25</sup> Janis Wilton, *Golden Threads*, Sydney, 2004, pp.17-25; Wilton 'Chinese stores in rural Australia'.

out as separate stores. The Hong Yuen store in Inverell, its façade intact but nothing else, has the site occupied by a newly constructed IGA supermarket and, on land behind the old store site, a big new barn-like Hong Yuen branch of Mitre 10 has been established under the management and ownership of members of the third generation of one of the early founders of the store. In Tenterfield, the Hop Sing store survived until the 1990s under the ownership of the son of its original owners but was then sold.<sup>26</sup>

In Tingha, the Wing Hing Long store survived until 1998 when, with the assistance of the NSW Heritage Office and Guyra Shire Council, it became a community managed museum. A visit to Wing Hing Long is a visit to a general store of the first decades of the twentieth century, and to a store that did not undergo the impressive alterations and developments evident in, for example, the Hong Yuen and Kwong Sing stores whose origins date from about the same period (the 1880s) as Wing Hing Long. It is also a visit to a store that, through its layout, its moveable heritage, its archival collection and the stories associated with it, provides insights into the experiences and challenges of Chinese storekeepers and general stores more broadly during the twentieth century. A virtual visit to the store and its story can be made on the website of the NSW Migration Heritage Centre.<sup>27</sup> The store is on the NSW State Heritage List.<sup>28</sup>



Wing Hing Long, Tingha, 2007. Grocery goods on display behind the front counter, and signage underneath the cashier's office.

Wing Hing Long and its collections are significant because they 'provide a unique documentation of the continuous and significant contribution of Chinese-Australians and of general stores to the history of retailing in regional New South Wales. They also provide significant insight into the rise and decline of the tin mining community in which the store is located.'<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Henry Hong, Tenterfield, 23 April and 10 September 1991. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/winghinglong/>

<sup>28</sup> Wing Hing Long, NSW Heritage List, [http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07\\_subnav\\_01\\_2.cfm?itemid=5044708](http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_01_2.cfm?itemid=5044708)

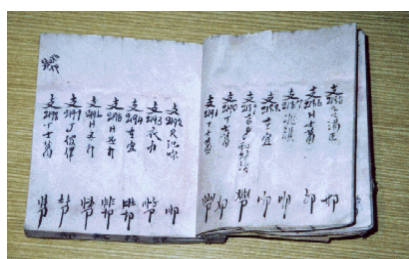
<sup>29</sup> Wing Hing Long, NSW Heritage List.



## Business Records: Chinese owned general stores

A variety and range of paper records were generated by general stores. They include invoices, stock lists, sample books, catalogues, correspondence, tax records, bank statements, advertising brochures, customer accounts, customer orders, stationery, legal records. These make it possible, for example, to track customers, business arrangements, staff, financial viability, goods and services bought and sold.

Collections and individual items have survived for some of the Chinese owned general stores that operated in New England during the twentieth century. Most are in private ownership.



Account book, Kwong Sing & Co., Glen Innes, about 1915.<sup>30</sup>

Examining one page from the book, Doris Yau-Chong Jones explains: 'The Arabic numbers are the cheque numbers. The character at the top of each column means "to pay". Most of the items sound like Scotch or Port and other "spirit" names. "p" can mean penny or pennies. There is a Chinese character that resembles "p" but here it must mean the currency of the time.'<sup>31</sup>



Aladdin Industries advertising letter, 1940, Wing Hing Long.<sup>32</sup>

Advertising letters and brochures, and mail order catalogues along with travelling salesmen were the main means through which storekeepers in rural areas identified merchandise and goods that they might want to sell.



Sing Sing & Co., Tenterfield, invoice, 1916.<sup>33</sup>

Surviving invoices often provide details about goods sold, prices, and customers. They can also confirm the address of the business and sometimes, as in this example, have sketches of the store itself.

<sup>30</sup> Courtesy Harvey Young, Glen Innes.

<sup>31</sup> Doris Yau-Chong Jones, Research notes, Golden Threads Project.

<sup>32</sup> Wing Hing Long Archival Collection

<sup>33</sup> Courtesy Marian Betts, Tenterfield.

**Objects: Kwong Sing and Company, Glen Innes**

The Land of the Beardies History House Museum in Glen Innes and descendants of Percy Young (Kwan Hong Kee), one of the early owners of the Kwong Sing store, have a number of objects that tell aspects of the history of the store.



(Above left) Flour bag with the label 'Glen Innes Mills, Sunlight Roller Flour, NSW Australia'. A translation of the Chinese characters tells us: 'The Sunlight brand superior quality of fine flour. Packed by Sun Kwong Sing Co in Australia.' The flour was marketed by the Kwong Sing and Company store in Glen Innes during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>34</sup>

(Above middle) Kwong Sing War calendar, 1900. One of a number of early twentieth century calendars used by the store probably as gifts to customers and other clients. The very English imagery emphasises that the store was reaching out to non-Chinese customers.

(Above right). Abacus used by staff members in the Kwong Sing store. Accounts, and other records were often in Chinese and used Chinese skills, such as counting with the abacus.



Kwong Sing manufactured furniture on site from the late nineteenth century to about the mid-1930s. The carpenters' workbench and tools above, now in the Land of the Beardies History House Museum, were made and used by the Chinese carpenters who worked at Kwong Sing. The chairs were made by the Chinese carpenters and, for a long time, were part of the office furniture at the store.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Doris Yau-Chong Jones, Research notes, Golden Threads Project.

<sup>35</sup> Courtesy of Harvey Young, Glen Innes, and Land of the Beardies History House Museum, Glen Innes.

## Lebanese hawkers, haberdashers and barbers

While some Chinese migrants were settling into storekeeping, Lebanese migrants began appearing in the region in the 1890s first as hawkers and later as haberdashers, some as barbers and in other small businesses. It was a pattern repeated across the state and across the country.<sup>36</sup>

Brought to Australia through chain migration which had family members sponsoring each other and which had village networks providing support to fellow villagers, these early Lebanese were known as 'Syrians' and, on arrival in Sydney, were provided with accommodation, training and employment opportunities in Redfern. Here, from the late nineteenth century, a number of Lebanese migrants had established shops and warehouses which supplied and trained newly arrived country men and women to pack small drapery items into baskets and onto carts and take to the roads. Joe Hanna whose father, Moses Hanna, had one of these warehouses before eventually moving to Armidale, described the process:

Now what did they [the newly arrived migrants] have to do. There was no work for them, they were illiterate, they couldn't speak or write and read English. ... most of them couldn't even read or write in Arabic. What could they do? Well, we had warehouses. They took goods and [we] taught them how to speak a little of the language, how to handle the money and they went peddling, hawking.<sup>37</sup>

Ida Joseph passed on the stories shared by her parents, Sarquis and Dora Solomon who arrived in Australia in 1897, about their early years hawking around the Lismore district before moving to Glen Innes:

... they had a basket – you know, the cane baskets not the hamper kind. It had a hard handle over the top... [and] they covered it with a cloth or canvas or something. This is what my mother used to tell us. And they had haberdashery in it, bits of boot laces and things like that. ... They'd walk and go to farmers and try to sell these things – these cottons or whatever they had.

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<sup>36</sup> Janis Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Hawking to Haberdashery*, Armidale, 1987; Trevor Batrouney, *Lebanese in Australia: research, writing and depictions*, Address to the Australian Lebanese Historical Society, September 2001, [http://www.alhsv.org.au/resources\\_research.html](http://www.alhsv.org.au/resources_research.html) ; Paul Convy, *Lebanese hawkers and traders*, *Australian Lebanese Historical Society* (website), 2002, <http://www.alhs.org.au/hawkers.htm> ; Anne Monsour, *Negotiating a place in a White Australia*, PhD, University of Queensland, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Joe Hanna, Armidale, 31 August 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project

That went on for a while and then I was coming along and Dad saved a bit of money. He bought sort of a cart with one horse ... and they'd go out together then. They got more goods. ... and they went out to farmers and they'd sell. I went with them. We used to sleep – I tell you it was sort of a caravan – those closed in caravans and they had the shop at the top.<sup>38</sup>

Ida Joseph also recalled that, as more children came along, her parents bought a larger cart and then, eventually, her mother and the children would stay at home while her father went hawking.



(left) Sarquis Solomon with his grandson, Eric Joseph, Glen Innes, 1927.<sup>39</sup> The covered wagon in the background was used for hawking.

(right) Jabour Nicholas in front of his hawker's cart with a young David Moses, Inverell, 1920s.<sup>40</sup> Emil Haddad explained that his grandfather, Jabour Nicholas, came to Australia a number of times and, each time, he got in his cart and hawked across the state.<sup>41</sup>

Among those who headed to New England and who eventually moved from hawking to open small drapery stores were men whose family names became synonymous with the stores that operated well into the twentieth century in towns throughout the region. There were, for example, Hannas and Jurys in Armidale; Solomons, Josephs and Correys in Glen Innes; and Josephs, La Hoods and Haddads in Inverell.<sup>42</sup> These tended to be family businesses. Fathers, sons, and often daughters and wives worked in the family store.

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Ida Joseph, Glen Innes, 5 October 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>39</sup> Courtesy Ida Joseph.

<sup>40</sup> Courtesy Emil Haddad.

<sup>41</sup> Emil Haddad, personal communication, November 2007.

<sup>42</sup> See entries in *Different Sights* database.

Employees, when needed, were frequently other family members or people from the same village. Networks stretched through the region and back to Sydney. In New England, migrants from Kfsarghab provided one network, those from Bterram and Ehden another, those from Zghorta another. There was intermarriage between families.

The number of Lebanese was small but significant. The rise and fall in numbers in key towns in the region suggest the pattern of immigration and settlement with its growth and peak in the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1921, 1933 and 1947 censuses the number of Lebanese-born in Armidale were 1, 4 and 28; in Glen Innes 32, 41 and 18; and in Inverell 9, 43 and 21.<sup>43</sup> Importantly, and in contrast to the Chinese, there were a significant number of females and the women played a central part in the business enterprises. Dora Solomon, for example, hawked with her husband Sarquis in the early years of the century, and their daughters worked in and managed a family store.<sup>44</sup>

Apart from haberdashery and drapery businesses, members of Lebanese families were also hairdressers and tobacconists and had other small businesses. Joseph Correy and his sons, for example, had three different hairdressing and tobacconist shops between 1905 and the mid 1960s. And, early in the twentieth century, Joseph Correy's brother, Norman, had a café in Glen Innes.<sup>45</sup> In Armidale, the Abood family opened a fruit market that operated from its establishment in 1941 until the 1970s.<sup>46</sup>



Joseph Correy (at back) inside his barber shop, Grey Street, Glen Innes, about 1908.<sup>47</sup>

In the back display case is '...the old *narghile* [water pipe]'. 'It's the only thing he brought from the old country. It's the most glorious greeny coloured glass.'<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Hawking to Haberdashery*, p.15.

<sup>44</sup> Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Hawking to Haberdashery*, p.19.

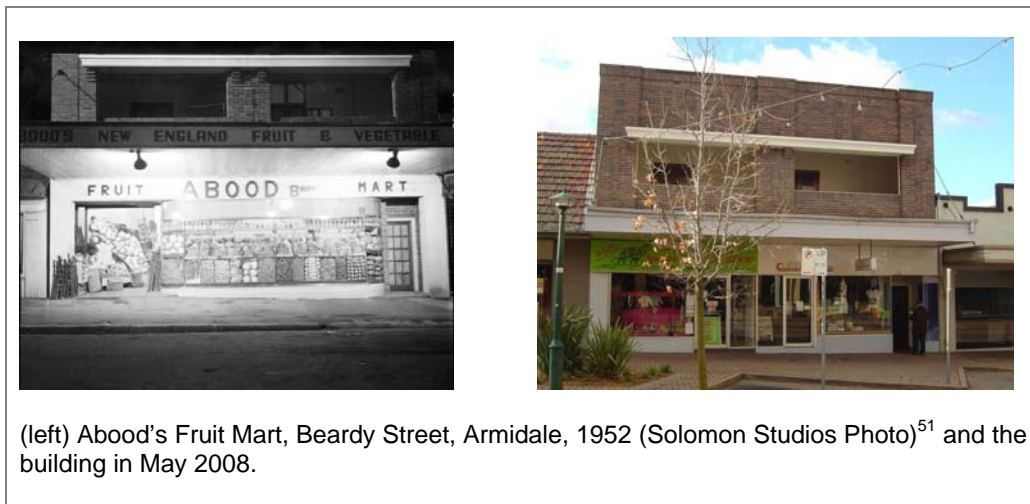
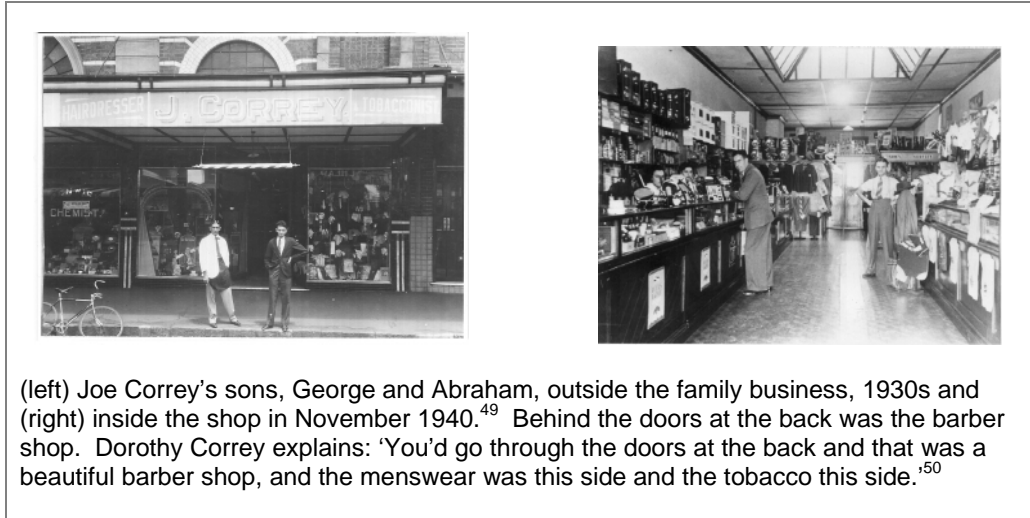
<sup>45</sup> Interview with Dorothy Correy, Glen Innes, 24 October 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>46</sup> *Armidale Express*, 30 May 1941, 30 August 1946; and John Hamel, 'Reminiscences of early Beardy Street', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 47, 2004, p. 17.

<sup>47</sup> Courtesy Dorothy Correy..

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Dorothy Correy, Glen Innes, 24 October 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project. On objects in memory see Janis Wilton, 'Telling objects', *Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, 30, 2008, pp.41-49.





By 2007, most of the early Lebanese drapery, hairdressing and general stores were no longer in existence. As the second generation passed on, the businesses tended to close. Third and fourth generations have moved into other occupations and followed different opportunities. Like so many of their generations in rural areas, they have moved to metropolitan centres where there are more perceived opportunities. An exception to this pattern is Hanna's Arcade in Armidale. The Hanna's store opened on the site in the late 1920s and in 1957 was extended and made twice as large. Operating under

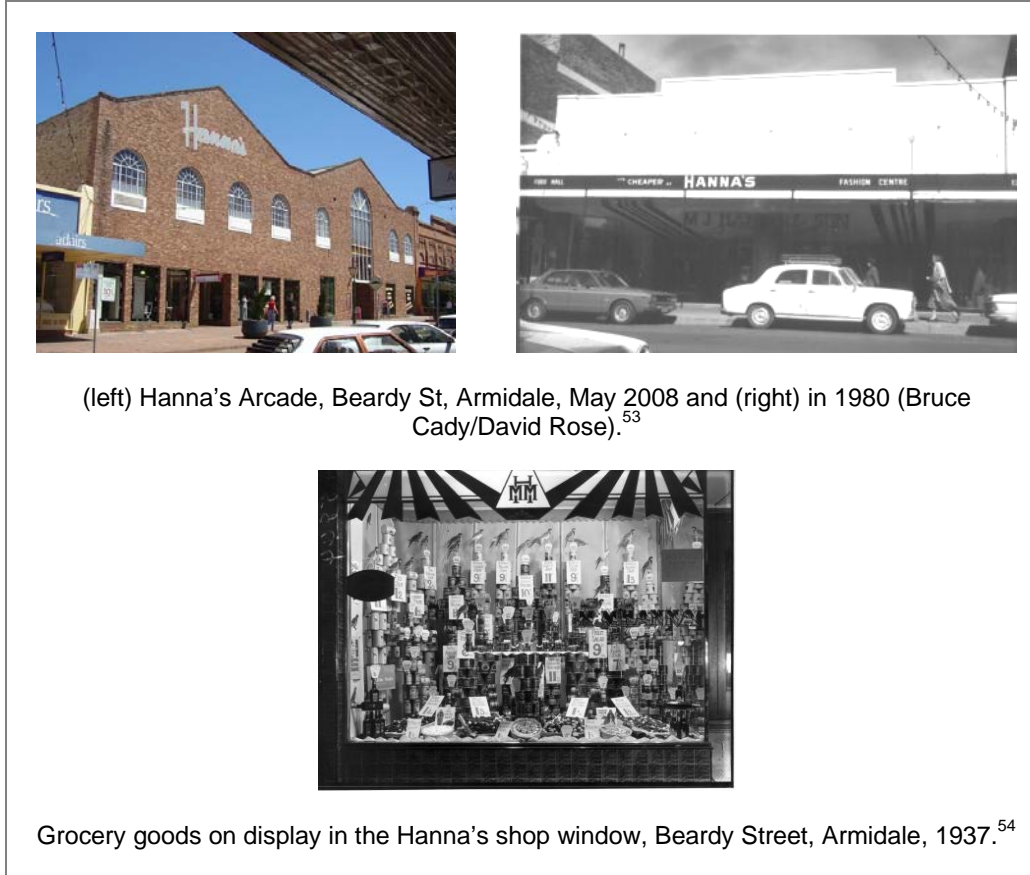
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<sup>49</sup> Courtesy Dorothy Correy.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Dorothy Correy.

<sup>51</sup> University of New England Heritage Centre and Regional Archives: HRCP 5163.

the name 'M.J.Hanna and Son' it advertised as 'The Bargain Kings'. The building was pulled down in 1988 and replaced by the current building which encompasses the Hanna's store with its range of clothing, manchester, shoes, travel goods and cosmetics, and a series of shops in the adjoining arcade.<sup>52</sup>



Explanations for the concentration of early Lebanese migrants in hawking, drapery stores and other small stores and businesses mark different features of the history of the Lebanese presence. One proudly given explanation is an appeal to ancient traditions stretching back to the Phoenicians who are lauded as early and effective traders. As Anne Monsour and others point out, however, this is more an appeal to a romantic heritage and fails to recognise the circumstances which greeted immigrants when they came to Australia.<sup>55</sup> The explanations lie elsewhere.

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Joseph Hanna; *Armidale Express*, 3 February 1928; Lionel Gilbert, *An Armidale Album*, Armidale, 1982, p.93.  
<sup>53</sup> University of New England Heritage Centre and Regional Archives: HRCP 2454  
<sup>54</sup> University of New England Heritage Centre and Regional Archives: HRCP 5148.  
<sup>55</sup> Monsour, *Negotiating a place in White Australia*.

The first Lebanese migrants to arrive came in the late 1890s in a period of economic depression, unemployment and an accompanying heightened concern about ‘foreigners’ taking jobs. This militated against any easy access to employment opportunities. So too did the migrants’ own language and skills.<sup>56</sup> As the earlier words from Joe Hanna indicated, most of the migrants had little or no English and many were illiterate in Arabic, their own language. As well, the skills they brought with them from Lebanon were mainly the skills required for hard and long labour on small farms. Being fitted up as hawkers and then, later, managing to establish their own small stores, meant working largely independently of Australian employers and being supported by members of their own communities. Moving out into rural areas also meant that they were not competing with each other. It was a big country, with many small towns. Although, as many discovered, the towns, at least initially, were rife with concerns about the trading practices and other customs of these ‘foreigners’ settling in their midst. Discriminatory attitudes and actions became an integral part of their experiences. As Joe Hanna described when recounting his family’s attempts to set up business in northern New South Wales in the 1920s:

Now the people in Tamworth said, ‘no, these are foreigners, they’re dagoes’. Of course we got this dagoes all the time and the Lebanese resented it – the Greeks resented it, the Italians...

[and in Armidale]... they did everything possible to try and keep us out, through the Chamber of Commerce, and that made my father all the more determined to stay! But what happened was that one paper was for us [and one was against us] and so we got free publicity and we just kept selling the goods. ... As I told you, we were wholesalers and our goods were that much cheaper ...<sup>57</sup>

### **Greek cafés, cinemas, hotels and fruit shops**

The pattern and motivations evident in the choice of occupation by Chinese as storekeepers and Lebanese as hawkers, haberdashers and in other small businesses are also evident in the presence of Greek migrants in small self-employed commercial enterprises throughout the region, especially during the first half of the twentieth century. There is always the talk of the ubiquitous Greek café in every country town and there is a tendency to associate the Greek presence only – or at least primarily – with cafés. This is unfortunate because, like their German, Chinese and Lebanese counterparts, Greek

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<sup>56</sup> Monsour, Negotiating a place in White Australia; Wilton, *Hawking to Haberdashery*.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Joe Hanna.



migrants could be found in a variety of businesses. As Kevin Cork and Effie Alexakis and Leonard Janiszewski have demonstrated, the focus on Greek cafés has tended to produce simplified stereotypes about the Greek presence, contributions and lifestyles in rural areas.<sup>58</sup>

The diversity of their businesses is clearly apparent in New England. There were many cafés established, owned and/or managed by Greek migrants. These included the IXL, Minerva, Nectar, Waratah, and White Rose in Armidale; Monterey in Barraba; IXL in Bundarra; Blue Bell in Emmaville; Paragon, Supreme and White Rose in Glen Innes; Australia, Monterey and Peters and Co. in Inverell; Cameo, Olympic and Paragon in Tenterfield; White Rose in Uralla; and Red Rose and Peters and Co. in Walcha.<sup>59</sup>



Interior of the Cameo Cafe, Tenterfield, about 1939,<sup>60</sup> and the site in 2007.



White Rose Cafe, Uralla, about 1923,<sup>61</sup> and in 2007.

<sup>58</sup> Kevin Cork, Greek cinemas in Australia, unfinished PhD thesis, *kythera-family.net* (website), <http://www.kythera-family.net>; Leonard Janiszewski and Effy Alexakis, 'The "Greek cafe": the future of Australia's past', *kythera-family.net* (website), <http://www.kythera-family.net>

<sup>59</sup> For further details about these businesses visit the *Different Sights* online database.

<sup>60</sup> Courtesy Peter Tsicalas who posted the photograph on *kythera-family.net*

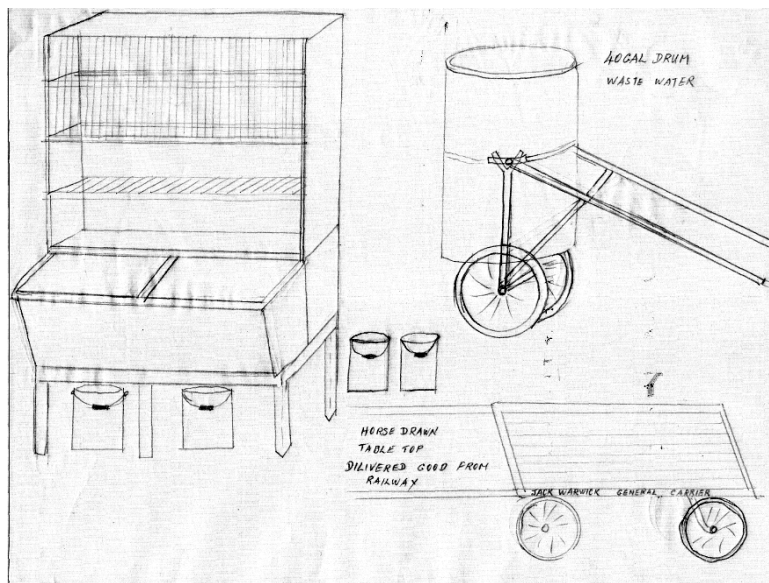
<sup>61</sup> Courtesy Eleni Dedes.

### Objects: Greek Cafés

Cutlery, crockery, fixtures and fittings, display cases, signage, soda fountains, menus – Greek cafés tended to be object rich. Some items have survived; many depend on descriptions drawn from memory.



Plates and logo from the Paragon Cafe, Glen Innes.<sup>62</sup>



Eleni Dedes' drawings of items she remembered from the White Rose Café in Uralla during the 1920s and 1930s. From top left: the dish washing tubs and dish drainer; a 40 gallon drum on wheels used to carry out dirty dishwashing water; and the table top dray used by a local carrier to deliver goods from the railway.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Land of the Beardies History House Museum.

<sup>63</sup> Courtesy Eleni Dedes. See also Wilton, 'Telling objects', pp.42-44.

Flanking the cafés there were a number of cinemas that were owned and managed by Greek migrants. These included the Arcadia and Capitol in Armidale; the Roxy and Grand in Glen Innes; the Capitol in Inverell; the Lyric in Tenterfield; the Civic in Walcha; and the School of Arts Cinema in Warialda.<sup>64</sup>



(Left) Capitol Theatre and Feros milk bar, Beardy St, Armidale, 1937.<sup>65</sup> (Right) the building in 2008.



The Roxy Cinema building in Glen Innes, 2008, just before it was demolished to make way for a Macdonalds outlet.



(Left) The Lyric Theatre building in Tenterfield, October 2007. (Right) Henry Hong of the Hop Sing Store with the Lyric Theatre in the background, about 1931.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> See entries in *Different Sights* online database.

<sup>65</sup> University of New England Heritage Centre and Regional Archives: HRCP 5145

<sup>66</sup> Courtesy Henry Hong.

Of the cinema owners themselves, some were particularly entrepreneurial. Jack Kouvelis, for example, began leasing cinemas in regional areas in about 1918 with his brother, Peter. By the late 1920s, Jack Kouvelis had his own cinema company, J.K.Capitol Theatres Pty Ltd and went on to develop and/or lease a number of other cinemas. These included what was the Theatre Royal in Armidale which, on leasing it in July 1928, Kouvelis renamed the Capitol Theatre. Similarly, in 1930 the company leased Theatre Inverell and renamed it the Capitol Theatre and, in order to keep competition away from the Capitol Theatre in Armidale, by 1936 Kouvelis had leased the competing Arcadia Theatre and kept it closed. By the time Kouvelis sold his company to Hoyts, he had a portfolio of eleven cinemas.<sup>67</sup>

Greek migrants also owned hotels. These included the Imperial in Armidale, and Apsley in Walcha.<sup>68</sup> There was also Sourry's bakery in Armidale, the Uralla Food and Supply Company, and New England Produce in Armidale.<sup>69</sup>



Sourry's bakery building, now a part of New England Institute of TAFE, and the plaque marking the foundation of the building in 1922.

The bakery was established and run by members of the Sourry family from 1923 until 1928. Family members also had interests in cafés and cinemas in the region.<sup>70</sup>

Across these business ventures, motivation, work practices and supporting networks were similar. Whether cafés, cinemas, hotels, green groceries, fish and chip shops or bakeries, the businesses could be – at least initially –

<sup>67</sup> Cork, Greek cinemas in Australia, Chapter 4.

<sup>68</sup> Hugh Gilchrist, *Australians and Greeks, Volume 1*, Sydney, 1992, pp.204-205; Interview with Eleni Dedes, Armidale, 25 October 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Eleni Dedes; Graham Wilson, Research notes, 2005 and 2007; Interview with Harris and Maroula Pavlou, Armidale, 3 November 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>70</sup> Graham Wilson, Research notes, 2005. Different Sights Project.

managed and staffed by family members and by fellow immigrants. English language skills were required for front of house and customer service but in the kitchens, projection rooms and bakehouses, English language was not essential – although it could slowly be acquired. As well, these were labour intensive enterprises where success was built on the long hours worked and where success did not require particular skills. Most skills could be learnt on the job. These were all features which suited immigrants in an alien – and not always hospitable – environment. Eleni Dedes described the process for her father's business, the White Rose Café in Uralla, in the 1930s:

My father would bring out young men, relatives – cousins or cousins' relations, and give them jobs in the shop and train them and teach them English. And they'd learn to cook and learn to serve over the counter and then, as soon as they got about a thousand pounds together, they'd go and open their own café ...<sup>71</sup>

The long hours and family nature of the businesses continued. Spiro Giovas described the working conditions in his fish and chip shop in Tenterfield in the mid-1980s:

We are open seven days a week, nine to nine, and I have to do all the cooking. My wife helps me a lot every day of the week. I couldn't afford to pay another person to work the hours she does. I couldn't afford to run the business without her.<sup>72</sup>

The networks which brought Greek migrants to work in the various businesses across the Tableland were networks based largely on family and on the village, island or locality of origin. In New England – as in the rest of New South Wales – the dominant network in the first half of the twentieth century was a network of immigrants who came from the island of Kythera. After the Second World War, Australia brought immigrants from other parts of Greece. Most settled in the metropolitan centres but some did make their way to the New England Tableland. The Pavlou and Rologas families in Armidale, for example, came from Cyprus, and Spiro Giovas who owned the Tenterfield fish shop for a time in the 1980s came from Piraeus. The importance of this network is captured in Harris Pavlou's recollection of his arrival in Sydney – and Uralla – in 1949:

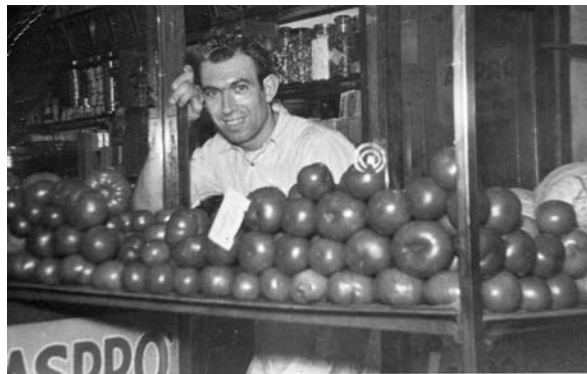
... when we come to the airport, Sydney, we was fifty six passengers in a plane and everyone had someone waiting for him except me ... I

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with Eleni Dedes.

<sup>72</sup> Janis Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Cafes and Cafeowners*, Armidale, 1989, p.35.

started crying for a while but after that I called a taxi and I said, 'Take me to the Cyprus Club' – I knew there was a Cyprus Club in there. 'Get me to the Cyprus Club', I say, and it took me to the Cyprus Club there and ... I had a couple of pots with me and I put them there and I went and saw the boss and I told him, I say, 'I used to work in Platres, Cyprus' – he came from Cyprus – 'and I only speak a little English,' I said to him. ...and he said to me, 'don't worry, you are going to get a job'. ... and about eight o'clock a fellow from Uralla, Jack Feros, ... and he was looking for somebody to bring to Uralla, to his café. And he called me, this fellow called me. He say, 'Harry, come here. This is Mr Jack Feros. He come from Uralla ... and he is looking for somebody to work for him. What about you going up?' I say, 'yes, if I don't like it I'll leave'. And I come to Uralla – I had one day in Sydney and the next day I come to Uralla.<sup>73</sup>



Harris Pavlou behind the fruit in the window of the White Rose Café, Uralla, about 1950.<sup>74</sup>

## Chinese restaurants

Chinese restaurants are like Greek cafés: they are seen to be ubiquitous. How many times do we hear the statement 'every country town has its Chinese restaurant' and, flowing from this, there are fairly simplified stereotypes of the nature of the restaurants, who runs them, and what they represent.

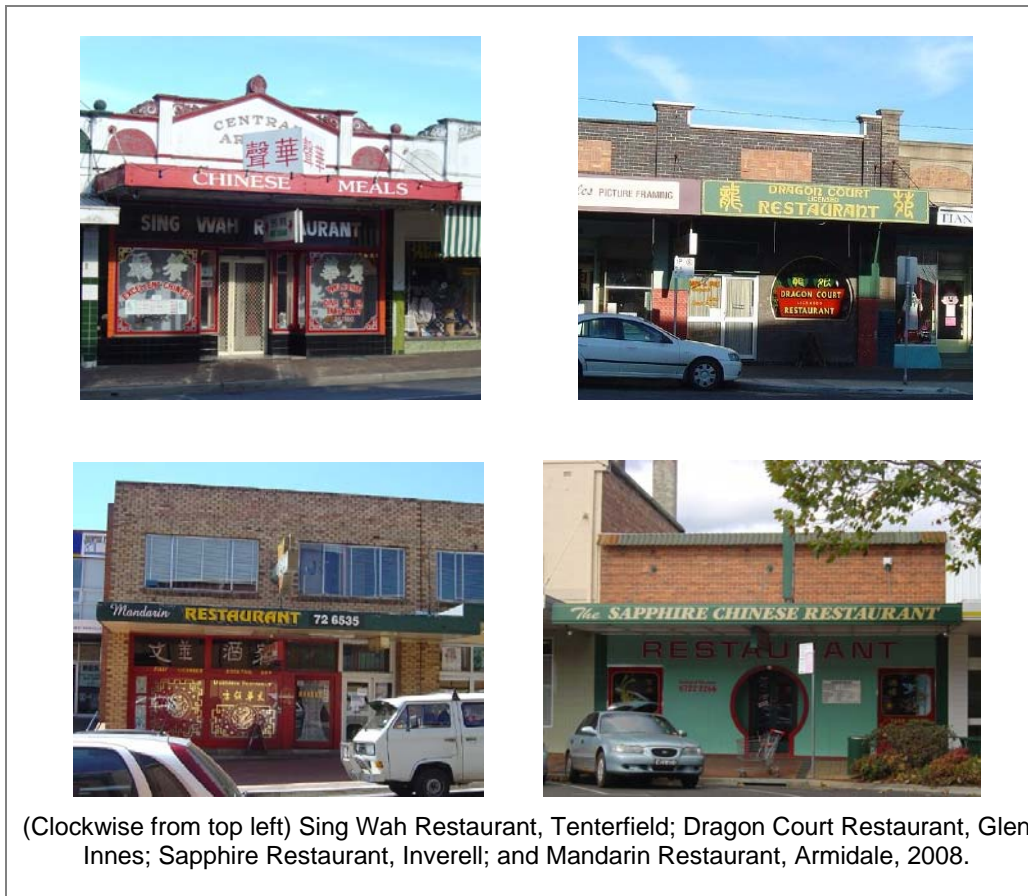
The Chinese restaurants that attract these descriptions are primarily a post World War Two phenomenon and, in many ways, they have replaced market gardens and general stores as first places of employment for Chinese

<sup>73</sup> Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Cafes and Cafeowners*, p.31.

<sup>74</sup> Courtesy Harris and Maroula Pavlou.



migrants. The figures suggest their significant role. In 1988 it was estimated that '7,000 cafés' (meaning restaurants) were 'operated by Chinese in New South Wales'.<sup>75</sup> And, certainly, there have been a number of Chinese restaurants operating in New England in the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. Those listed in the 2007 telephone directory include the Mandarin, Mun Hing and Mun Shing in Armidale; Dragon Court and Shen Yen in Glen Innes; Fortune Chinese Restaurant in Guyra; Sapphire and Tin Cheung in Inverell; Sing Wah and Uncle Tom's Chinese Cuisine in Tenterfield; Yu Wah in Uralla; and Walcha Chinese Restaurant.



These restaurants of the mid to late twentieth century have nineteenth and early twentieth century precursors. In mining towns like Rocky River, Tingha and Emmaville, there were Chinese owned café and cook houses often serving Chinese food for the Chinese working the mines and, after most of their countrymen had left, some continued to serve some distinctly Chinese

<sup>75</sup> Meggan McKie, *Our familiar foreigners*, BAHons, University of New England, 2002, p.24.

food to local residents who were not Chinese. The Lowes' Lun Jong Café in Tingha provides one example. It is remembered by local residents for its wonderful steamed pork buns although these were served alongside ice cream (the ice cream machine was in Clarrie Smith's Museum) and cordials available in other cafes of the time.<sup>76</sup> And, invariably, once the main customers were no longer primarily Chinese, distinctly Chinese food, tableware and interiors were flanked if not replaced by more familiar interiors and food.

The experience of post World War Two Chinese restaurants has been different. Their selling point and customer appeal has been grounded in the ability to offer food and an eating experience that is both foreign and familiar. In this they are different to their precursors. They overtly advertise that the food they sell and often the restaurant interiors, the fixture, the fittings, the eating utensils provide a taste of different places. In the Mandarin Restaurant in Armidale, for example, you walk past a tank with fish, the interior is an abundance of red and gold with Chinese characters and banners, there are Chinese lanterns and other overtly Chinese decorative elements. Other Chinese restaurants in the region similarly repeat this symbolic mixture of mirrors, fish, water, red and gold. And the exteriors similarly loudly proclaim the very Chineseness – or at least the Australian-Chineseness – of the restaurant: Chinese names, Chinese characters, gold lettering, red paint. The Chinese restaurants tend to stand out in the streetscapes.

They are exotic yet familiar. As elsewhere in Australia, Chinese restaurants or cafés were among the first, if not the first, to offer takeaway meals that were different to fish and chips or hamburgers. They also offered – and continue to offer – inexpensive dining out and encounters with food that has a Chinese origin but has been adapted to a perceived Australian palate: honey prawns, sweet and sour dishes, fried rice. They provide a safe place for a cultural exchange, however limited.<sup>77</sup>

Chinese restaurants have also provided places of employment and opportunity for immigrants and their families. Some restaurant owners and employees have links to the pre-war immigration of Chinese; most belong to post-war immigration and display the diverse origins of the Chinese who have come to Australia since 1945. For all of them, restaurants provide culturally and linguistically familiar or safe work environments requiring limited capital

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<sup>76</sup> Notes from a conversation with Clarrie Smith, Tingha, 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>77</sup> See Meggan McKie, *Our familiar foreigners*, BAHons thesis, School of History, University of New England, Armidale, 2002.



investment and offering the potential through hard work to establish a financial base in Australia.

### **A French café, a Dutch carpenter and a Czech photographer**

The clustering of people from the same cultural backgrounds in particular commercial, trade and manufacturing enterprises highlights a society that, by the late nineteenth century, was wary of foreigners and desiring to exclude them from certain employment opportunities. It also highlights that immigrants felt more comfortable and supported, at least initially, by working with and for fellow countrymen, and by entering small businesses that required limited capital expenditure and were labour intensive.<sup>78</sup>

The danger is that these clear patterns distract attention from the exceptions: Greek migrants who did not become café proprietors or immigrants from backgrounds other than German, Chinese, Greek or Lebanese who opened cafés, worked as jewellers or pursued other commercial roles making and selling goods. The exceptions add texture and layers to the presence of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds and their descendants.

These exceptions include, for example, individuals like French-born watchmaker Jules De Moulin and café proprietor Edward Le Dilly, Swedish-born butcher and mining entrepreneur Peter Speare, Danish-born coach-builder Carl Tronier, Dutch-born carpenter Willem Brantsma, and Russian Jewish tailor Colman Savage. They include Chinese migrants and descendants of migrants like Walter Ching Hoy and Joe Hing who established themselves in trades or the Chinese carpenters who, for some time, made furniture in a workshop at the Kwong Sing store and others who travelled through the region as itinerant carpenters. There were photographers August Hartmann in Dundee, son of German migrants, and travelling Czech-born photographer Joseph Check whose camera captured many moments and places in New England's early twentieth century history. There were also carriers and carters like George Brauer in Tenterfield and taxi drivers like the Chinese-Australian Gunn brothers also in Tenterfield.<sup>79</sup> And, particularly in the late twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries, there are the increasing number of restaurants and take away food outlets offering 'ethnic' cuisine and often owned and operated by immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Among those operating in 2007 on the Tableland were Angelo's

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<sup>78</sup> For a study of migrants in small business see Jock Collins *et.al*, *Shop Full of Dreams*, Sydney, 1995.

<sup>79</sup> For details on these migrants, their enterprises and sources of information see the *Different Sights* online database.

Italian Restaurant, the Indo-Oz Food Store, the Noodle Shop and Zata Mediterranean Restaurant in Armidale, and Yim Thai with outlets in both Glen Innes and Inverell.<sup>80</sup>

### Finding Edward De Lilly

In his search through the *Glen Innes Examiner*, Graham Wilson found references to E. Le Dilly, fruiterer and confectioner.<sup>81</sup> Browsing photographs (below) of Glen Innes, he identified Le Dilly's shop on the north side of the Town Hall and, in Douglas Abbott's shared memories of Glen Innes, there was mention of Le Dilly's 'green grocers business in the small shop on the northern side of the Town Hall'. Douglas also shares the following graphic image of 'Frenchman' Le Dilly:

In war time concerts in the Town Hall he was a regular performer on the stage. Wearing a large red, white and blue sash and brandishing a sword, his singing of *The Marseillaise* in French, was very popular with the people seated in the hall.<sup>82</sup>



(right) Le Dilly's green grocer's shop on the left of the Town Hall, and a peace day march in Grey Street passing in front of Le Dilly's shop, 1918.<sup>83</sup> The signage on the shop reads 'Frenchy' 'The Entente' and 'Vegetables fresh daily'.

From the mid-nineteenth century, the selling and making of goods on the New England Tableland has both attracted and been developed through significant contributions from immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds. And their contributions certainly seem to outweigh their numbers.

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<sup>80</sup> 2008 Telephone Directory

<sup>81</sup> *Glen Innes Examiner*, 28 April 1919 and 21 March 1921.

<sup>82</sup> Douglas Abbott, 'Further Glen Innes tales of yesterday', *Land of the Beardies History House Bulletin*, 18/1, June 1990, p.14.

<sup>83</sup> Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW: At Work and Play 02491 and 02584.

## **BODY, SOUL, MIND**

As towns and communities grew, attention turned to the care of the bodies, souls and minds of the growing populations. Health care, religion and education became markers of settlement and of ideas about progress and community values. In all these areas, the main providers have come from English-speaking backgrounds. Yet the presence of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds is significant. It marks patterns and aspects of Australia's rural heritage that are easily overlooked if attention remains only on the dominant providers.

### **Doctors, herbalists and an Indian oculist**

In the twenty-first century there is a shortage of medical practitioners in regional Australia. Local residents, government officials, the medical profession have set up schemes and strategies to lure doctors to practices in rural towns and to entice them to stay. In 2008, for example, a new School of Rural Medicine based at the University of New England was opened: the idea was to train and anchor new doctors to rural practices.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the National Rural Health Alliance aims to improve the health and welfare of Australians living in rural areas, documents the shortage of trained medical professionals and supports campaigns to address the shortage.<sup>2</sup>

The concern is not new. Since Europeans first moved into the vast expanses beyond the emerging metropolitan centres, health care and services have been an issue. As rural settlements developed, so too did the need for doctors, hospitals and other health care workers. Initially, settlers used their own initiatives. Eventually, government and public subscriptions paid for basic infrastructure and public hospitals were established.

The challenge has always been to find the personnel willing to make a life and make a living providing health services to small, often scattered and relatively remote rural communities. From early on, one response to the challenge has been the services provided by medical practitioners whose qualifications and/or expertise were acquired not just outside Australia but outside English-speaking worlds. Their presence and services have been acknowledged as filling an otherwise unfillable gap and as often providing excellent care. The underbelly of their contribution, however, has been – and continues to be – a

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<sup>1</sup> 'Julia Gillard opens three ground breaking facilities at UNE', *UNE News and Events*, 22 July 2008. <http://blog.une.edu.au/news/2008/04/>

<sup>2</sup> *National Rural Health Alliance Inc.*, <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/>

wariness and sometimes openly voiced prejudice about the quality of ‘foreign qualifications’ and the suitability of ‘foreigners’ as medical practitioners. These experiences and sentiments have been played out in New England.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the doctors from non-English-speaking backgrounds who came to the region included Christian Schrader who worked in the Walcha district in the mid-nineteenth century; Louis Segol who practised in Glen Innes and Inverell during the 1870s; Georg Bruhn in Bundarra in the 1880s; Louis Vallee in Inverell in the early twentieth century; and Giuseppe Romeo and a Dr Verbrugghen in Guyra around 1904 and in the 1920s.<sup>3</sup> The contributions and presence of these doctors – and others – emerges through local memories and other records. On Louis Vallee, for example, local resident Thelma Taylor recalled:

He seemed to be the leading doctor, and after his death Mrs Vallee went to France and returned with two beautiful wreaths made entirely of small beads, mostly blue, to place on his grave, but people used to snip pieces off to take as souvenirs until finally there was nothing left, and as there was no headstone his grave is unmarked. Mrs Vallee returned to France to live.<sup>4</sup>



The photograph above held in the State Library of NSW identifies a two storeyed, timber building as ‘possibly the home and surgery of Dr Louis Segol, Glen Innes or Inverell’<sup>5</sup>, and is suggestive of the comfortable circumstances in which Segol and his family lived. Eve Chappell suggests that the building is

<sup>3</sup> Graham Wilson, Research notes for New England Immigrants, 2007-2008; Elizabeth Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, Inverell, 1981, p.254; *Glen Innes Examiner*, 12 August 1898; Pauline Powell, Dr Georg Hermann Brunn, unpub.ms.; ‘Reminiscences of Miss Thelma Taylor’, *Tide of Time*, 4, April 1970, p.6; and Rex Toomey, *Guyra*, Armidale, 1983, p.26.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Reminiscences of Miss Thelma Taylor’, p.6.

<sup>5</sup> Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW: At Work and Play 01831.

the Warma Inkata Bed and Breakfast located on the New England Highway opposite the public school.<sup>6</sup> Certainly, a photograph of the building indicates that this is the case.<sup>7</sup>

In the second half of the twentieth century, the ranks of rural doctors were intentionally increased by government policies specifically aimed at doctors from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Doctors with overseas qualifications were given incentives and special conditions if they were willing to practice in rural areas. Dutch-trained Theodore Verbeek who had worked in Indonesia before migrating to Australia explained the regulations which brought him to New England (Bundarra and then Inverell) in the 1960s:

...there is a rule which they call regional district – there are certain areas ... where the government would like to have a doctor but which is not appealing enough for an Australian doctor to come ... First of all your degree must be of a quality which is equivalent to what they are used to here and they considered that the Dutch was that and then you had to stay for five years and once you have been for five years in that particular area then you get granted full registration for NSW.<sup>8</sup>

The services provided by Dr Verbeek and other medical practitioners from non-English-speaking backgrounds were comparable to those of their English-speaking colleagues: working from private practices, attending patients in the local hospital, handling the variety of ailments and accidents required of a rural General Practitioner. Although there were significant adjustments required. The medical system itself was different, drugs had different names, the types of common ailments were often different, and there were all the issues with cross-cultural communication. Assistance and support to adjust to the new environment was needed. As Theodore Verbeek explained:

The medical system especially the referral system is very difficult but that's where I found the doctors here in Inverell very good. Whenever I had problems I used to give them a phone call ... I had no problems there, only helpful.

One of the problems ... I came from a very busy practice in Indonesia, ... hospital plus my private practice. I worked from dawn to dark and then suddenly I came to Bundarra and there were just not the people ... I still remember the first person who came to me with a little cut on the finger and wanted that stitched. My [nursing] sister [in Indonesia]

<sup>6</sup> Eve Chappell, Pers. communication, April 2009. Eve noted that the building was up for sale at the time.

<sup>7</sup> A photograph can be viewed at <http://www.warmainkata.com/>

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Theodore Verbeek, Inverell, 6 October 1983. Immigrants in the Bush.

did that. I wouldn't even see that person and suddenly you realise what kind of difference there is. I mean in Indonesia I had 10 typhoid patients to look after every day and suddenly typhoid – the last typhoid case in the northern districts was 50 years ago, something like that. It's a different medical – a lot more older people with chronic diseases [and] the difficult the names of the drugs, took me months to get that.<sup>9</sup>

Not as comparable were the services provided by the Chinese herbalists and other practitioners of alternative medicine whose presence can be tracked across the region.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, local newspaper advertisements declare the presence of Mr Ah Bing in his premises in Marsh Street, Armidale; Harry Fat Chong's ability to cure anything; Lee Gow's multiple services as 'general storekeeper, fruiterer and Chinese doctor' at Bundarra; See Tong's abilities as a Chinese herbalist in Emmaville; Willie Sin as someone who should be 'consulted on all male and female complaints' at his premises in Hill Street gardens, Uralla; and Thomas Ah Sheah was listed as a herbalist on the Glen Innes Electoral Roll in 1946.<sup>10</sup> There are also advertisements for the itinerant herbalists and other practitioners – not always Chinese – who set up temporary premises in a town. In 1900, 'Jalaldeen – Indian Oculist and Pile Doctor' declared that he would be remaining in Inverell at Chandler's Hotel – 'Cures piles, toothaches, indigestion ... Indian medicines for all afflictions'.<sup>11</sup> In 1903 Hermann Emil Kugelman describing himself as 'the celebrated consulting herbal practitioner of ... Melbourne' announced that he would be visiting New England.<sup>12</sup>

Advertisement, *Tenterfield Star*, 2 January 1922.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Theodore Verbeek.

<sup>10</sup> *Armidale Argus*, 22 August 1903; *Glen Innes Examiner*, 1898 and 1899; *Tingha Advocate*, 20 December 1900; *Emmaville Argus*, 27 July 1918; *Uralla Times*, 23 November 1918; Index cards, Land of the Beardies History House Museum Archives.

<sup>11</sup> *Inverell Times*, 14 August 1900.

<sup>12</sup> *Inverell Times*, 24 October 1903.

The services provided by these alternative practitioners varied. Identified largely as ‘quacks’ by the established medical profession of the time, some most likely did live up to the image: bogus remedies, limited experience and qualifications.<sup>13</sup> Others, however, defied the image and became well established and recognised in their communities as providers of a medical service that was otherwise unavailable or that, indeed, offered a good or even better alternative to that which was available. Local Tingha resident, Clive Hayden, recalled the local Chinese herbalist in his town. He could not remember his name but he could remember the effectiveness of his cures and some of the specific treatments: cabbage poultices on the eyes and curing a finger of whitlow.<sup>14</sup>

The nature and depth of the practices of some of the Chinese herbalists is suggested by surviving items used by Fah Sue Tet Fong who worked as a herbalist in the tin mining community of Tingha from the 1880s until his death in 1929. Among the items are a collection of approximately forty books with Chinese herbal remedies, instructions and illustrations. Dating from the mid-nineteenth century, many of them are annotated by Fah Sue Tet Fong. The Tet Fong collection also includes a variety of herbal medicines, weighing scales, and bowls.

#### Items from the Tet Fong Collection<sup>15</sup>



(Left to right): Chinese medicine bottles with their labels intact; bottles still containing herbal medicines; weighing scales.

The practice of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and other alternative practices went into abeyance as the early practitioners died out or moved on and as western medical practices extended their control as the dominant form of health care. It was not until the late twentieth century with the growth of interest in alternative medicines that New England – like the rest of Australia –

<sup>13</sup> For context and background: Philippa Martyr, ‘When doctors fail: Ludwig Bruck’s list of unregistered practitioners (1886)’, *Electronic Journal of Australian and New Zealand History*, October 1997, <http://www.jcu.edu.au/aff/history/articles/bruck.htm>; and Philippa Martyr, *Paradise of Quacks*, Sydney, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Janis Wilton, Field notes. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>15</sup> Some are on display in the Wing Hing Long Store Museum, Tingha. See also Janis Wilton, *Golden Threads*, Sydney, 2004, pp. 38-40.

again accommodated practitioners versed in remedies and treatments developed outside the English-speaking world. As a measure of the growing acceptance of these alternative treatments, practitioners have come from among the ranks of Australians from English-speaking backgrounds as well as their non-English-speaking counterparts. Capturing these changes and the messages they convey, TCM Victorian practitioner Rey Tiquia has written an article that focuses on the symbolism of a small English-made medicine bottle containing a Chinese herbal remedy produced by a Chinese herbalist in Melbourne in the early twentieth century. He argues that the bottle should be a tiny icon of Australian history: it represents the early presence of Chinese herbalists in Australia, their existence on the margins and the changing status of alternative medical practices in the late twentieth century.<sup>16</sup>

### **An Italian bishop, Chinese temples and a mosque**

New England is well endowed with churches. Some remain active as places of worship; others are now in use as homes, video stores, offices, museums. Their presence – and their predecessors – suggest the significant role played by Christianity as the dominant religion in the region following the arrival of Europeans. As Jennifer Clark argues, in the mid to late nineteenth century, the growth in the number of churches combined with the replacement of itinerant by resident clergymen were indicative of the dominance and status of Christian values as well as markers of ‘increased stability and respectability’.<sup>17</sup> And these churches and clergymen were primarily from English, Scottish and Irish backgrounds and from the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Wesleyan denominations. Their stories are told and retold in local histories.<sup>18</sup>

Within the ranks of the colonial clergy there were, however, some with quite different cultural backgrounds. Most well-known is Italian-born Elzear Torreggiani, Roman Catholic Bishop of Armidale from 1879 to his death in 1904. He was appointed amidst, and probably due to, tensions between the largely Irish bishops (and Irish congregations) in regional areas and the English archbishop of Sydney, Roger Vaughan.<sup>19</sup> At the time of his arrival in New England, his bishopric (which extended beyond the Tableland) had only

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<sup>16</sup> Ray Tiquia, ‘Bottling an Australian medical tradition: traditional Chinese medicine during the Australian federation’ in *After the Rush: Regulation, Participation and Chinese Communities in Australia 1860-1940*, eds Sophie Couchman, John Fitzgerald, Paul Macgregor, Melbourne, 2004, pp.203-215.

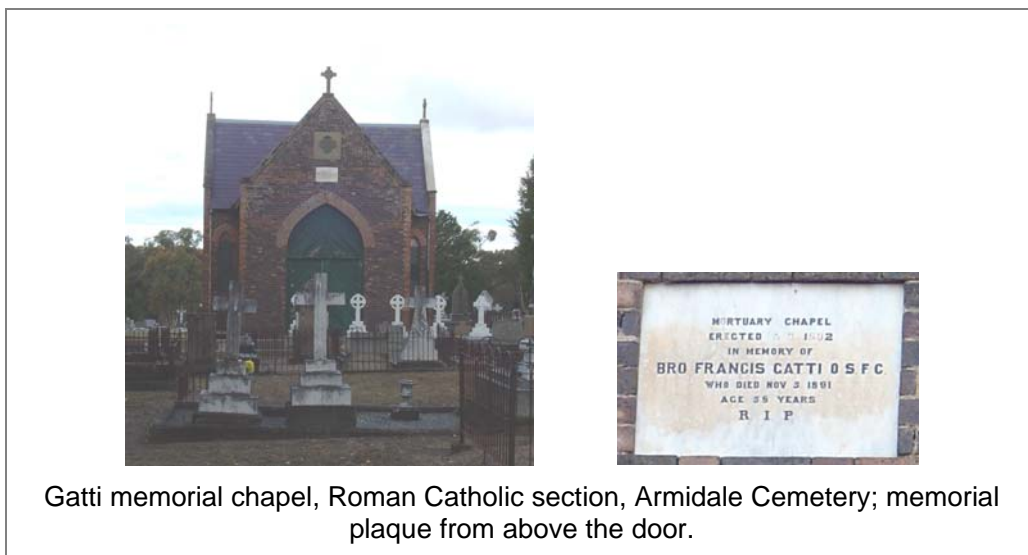
<sup>17</sup> Jennifer Clark, ‘Religious life’ in *High Lean Country: Land, People and Memory in New England*, eds. Alan Atkinson *et.al*, Sydney, 2006, p.187.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, A.W. Cameron, *A Short History of Glen Innes*, Glen Innes, 1987; Lionel Gilbert, *An Armidale Album*, Armidale, 1982, pp. 141-167; and R.B. Walker, *Old New England*, Sydney, 1966, Chapter 10.

<sup>19</sup> John Farrell, ‘Elzear Torreggiani: the Italian friar who became Bishop of Armidale’, *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 48, 2005, pp.105-116.



two schools, about six priests and no religious orders.<sup>20</sup> By the time of his death, and under his leadership, the Tableland alone had twelve Catholic schools, three religious orders and a growing number of churches, convents, presbyteries, schools and other buildings already built or under way.<sup>21</sup> Among the religious orders, were the Ursuline nuns who had fled Bismarck's Germany,<sup>22</sup> and among the Capuchin brothers brought to assist Torreggiani was Francis Gatti whose imprint remains through the landscaping and gardens of Armidale's Central Park, Lambert Park, the grounds of St Mary's Cathedral, the Ursuline convent, and the Roman Catholic section of the cemetery. There is also a Gatti memorial chapel in the cemetery and the pathways through Central Park are labelled the 'Brother Gatti Walk'.<sup>23</sup>



Gatti memorial chapel, Roman Catholic section, Armidale Cemetery; memorial plaque from above the door.

Among ordained Wesleyan clergymen in the nineteenth century, there was Chinese-born Joseph Tear Tack who worked for the Chinese Methodist Mission in Tingha from the mid-1880s to the mid-1890s before moving on to Darwin and to Cairns, where he died in 1901.<sup>24</sup> Tear Tack was among the small but growing number of Chinese migrants who were recruited to minister

<sup>20</sup> Walker, *Old New England*, p.140.

<sup>21</sup> Walker, *Old New England*, p.140.

<sup>22</sup> Pauline Kneipp, 'The Ursuline order in Armidale: beginnings', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 23, 1980, pp. 35-50; and Mary Kneipp, *Here At The End of The World: Ursuline Pioneers in Australia*, Sydney, 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Gilbert, *An Armidale Album*, pp.206-207; Lionel Gilbert, 'Armidale Central Park and its monuments', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 27, 1984, pp. 83-86; J.N.G. Grant, 'Brother Francis da Jesi', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 41, 1998, pp.84-88; and John Farrell, 'The Brother Francis Gatti memorials', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 44, 2001, pp. 75-77.

<sup>24</sup> Evadine Swanson, 'Chinese immigrants in New England', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 2, 1968, pp.31-32; Helen Brown, *Tin at Tingha*, Armidale, 1982, p. 35; and Ian Welch, *Christianity and the Chinese in 19th and early 20th century Australia*, 2001-, <http://131.172.16.7:81/welch/index.htm>

to their countrymen and to work on bringing them into the fold of Christianity and away from what were perceived as the alien and uncivilised religious practices that they had brought from China. As the minister officiating at Tear Tack's ordination declared, he '...wished all the Chinese people all the advantages Christianity and civilisation could bring them'.<sup>25</sup>

The reasoning was probably many-layered: language and cultural differences suggested that a Chinese ministering to fellow Chinese (even if their dialects were different, which so often they were) was likely to have more success. As well, this was the era of 'white Australia' and Chinese were only reluctantly accepted into mainstream social institutions and, when they were, it tended to be when they appeared to live by the white man's rules. It is perhaps this that partly explains the success of the more fringe denominations and groups in attracting Chinese converts. In Tingha, for example, the local branch of the Salvation Army successfully recruited members of the Chinese community: a number of Suey family members joined as did Robert Duck Chong who went on to become a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army.<sup>26</sup>



Tingha Salvation Army Band, 1914.<sup>27</sup>

There are four members of the Suey family in the band, including the bandmaster Syd Suey. Their grandparents were James Suey from Amoy in China and Margaret Battersby.

In Glen Innes and Tenterfield, it was the Seventh Day Adventists who proved attractive to other Chinese-Australian families: the Hon family who owned the Sun Sun store in Tenterfield, Mary Hong in the Hop Sing store opposite, and

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors*, Sydney, 1997, p.100. See also Wilton, *Golden Threads*, pp.99-103.

<sup>26</sup> Interviews with Robert Duck Chong, Sydney, 26 April and 5 July 1991. Chinese in New England Project.; *1888-1988: 100 Years of Service: Tingha Salvation Army*, Tingha, 1988.

<sup>27</sup> Image reproduced from *1888-1988: 100 Years of Service*, p.26.

Amy Gett from the Yow Sing store in Emmaville were all devout Seventh Day Adventists.<sup>28</sup>

While some Chinese migrants converted to Christianity once in Australia, other migrant groups brought their versions of Christianity with them. Many of the nineteenth century German migrants, for example, were Lutherans. According to Eileen Hartmann those who settled around Dundee, in the absence of their own denomination, elected to join the Church of England.<sup>29</sup> In Tenterfield, John Henry Sommerlad and his family opted, instead, for the newly established Wesleyan Church.<sup>30</sup> In Inverell in the 1890s, by contrast, Pastor Haussman was reported as providing Lutheran services in German in the Presbyterian Church in Inverell.<sup>31</sup>

Greek migrants brought their Greek Orthodox beliefs and practices. Weddings, christenings, and other rites of passage often required the contracting of a Greek Orthodox priest from Sydney, and services were observed and festivals celebrated at the Greek Orthodox Church of St Demetrius (St James) in Tamworth. In 1983 Eleni Dedes described the activities:

Now to a wedding or for St James Day in Tamworth, the Greeks from Uralla, Armidale, Guyra and Glen Innes come and there'd be, oh, well over two hundred people, might be more. We don't usually count the littlies...

The celebrations are important. For St James day in Tamworth they have a service and they'll take the St James holy picture, and go around the church three times and, after the service, they have a barbecue and a big celebration.

For a wedding, for funerals, or baptisms, we need to get a priest up. We have to apply for a priest for when he's free because there is a shortage of priests at the moment and we have to pay his fares both ways, his accommodation and we have to pay a fee to the church for the hall. Any of them will lend us a church, although we have a Greek church in Carroll and a Greek church, St James, in Tamworth.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Interviews with Dulcie Hon, Sydney, 8 July and 17 September 1992; Henry Hong, Tenterfield, 23 April and 10 September 1991; and Kevin Gett, Brisbane, 23 February 1990 and 22 September 1991. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>29</sup> Eileen Hartmann, *Dundee*, Dundee, 1979, pp.137-138.

<sup>30</sup> E.Lloyd Sommerlad, *The Migrant Shepherd*, Sydney, 1986, pp.85-86.

<sup>31</sup> Wiedemann, *World of Its Own*, Inverell, 1981, p.120.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Eleni Dedes, Armidale, 25 October 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

Italians who came to the tobacco growing districts around Ashford, Bonshaw and Mingoola brought their distinctly Italian brand of Catholicism. In Ashford this, at first, caused confrontation and confusion. Local priest, Father Ted Kennedy, recalled the stories told of the clash of cultures that occurred around the church. He spoke of an Easter mass when the service happened outside as well as inside the church, with the men drinking *chianti* and the then officiating priest becoming quite angry. He went on to observe how the situation had changed as the church adapted to the different practices and the local Sardinian community also adapted.<sup>33</sup>

More recently – and with some initial reservations from the local community – the Bruderhofs with their followers coming from a variety of different cultural backgrounds, established a base near Inverell.<sup>34</sup> The arrival of the Bruderhof is indicative of the changes in the religious practices observed in New England: Christianity remains dominant although – as in the rest of Australia – secularisation has taken its toll and religions other than Christianity have an increasing representation.

In the city of Armidale in the 2006 census, for example, 15,182 people declared their religious affiliation as Christianity, 3,555 as no religion, 211 as Buddhism, 106 as Islam, 61 as Hinduism, 11 as Judaism and 127 as ‘other religions’. In the town of Inverell, 7,910 claimed Christianity, 1,012 no religion, 31 Buddhism, 4 Islam and 21 other religions.<sup>35</sup>

The University of New England has flanked its Christian chaplaincy services with the establishment of a mosque through which international students can obtain halal food.<sup>36</sup> The changes reflect the impact of the increasingly diverse backgrounds of post-1945 immigrants, and the growing interest in notions of spirituality that spread beyond denomination bound Christianity. They are a reflection of the much more dramatic changes evident in metropolitan centres: those heartlands of post-war immigration. They are, however, changes which link to a much longer history of the presence of non-Christian religious practices and beliefs amongst New England immigrants.

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<sup>33</sup> Helen Andreoni, *It's Like Building a Road Over a Swam* (video), Armidale, 1981; and Helen Andreoni, ‘Non-English speaking women in an isolated rural community’, *Armidale Papers* (Graduate Diploma in Multicultural Education, Armidale CAE), 7, 1983, pp.11-12.

<sup>34</sup> ‘The Bruderhof controversy’, *The Religion Report*, ABC Radio National broadcast, 9 May 2001. <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/religionreport/stories/2001/292104.htm>

<sup>35</sup> Birthplace tables for Armidale-Dumaresq and Inverell, 2006 Census, Australian Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/Census+data>. For an overview of the impact of immigration on religious practices in Australia see Hilary Carey, *Believing in Australia*, Sydney, 1996, Chapter 6.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Facilities for Muslim students and staff’, *UNE*, <http://www.une.edu.au/chaplaincy/muslim.php>

In 1841, for example, of the 1115 people counted in Armidale and district, one recorded their religion as Jewish and another as 'pagan or mohammedan'.<sup>37</sup> These were isolated individuals for whom practice of different beliefs must have been extremely difficult.

The ranks of those whose lives had been lived within the teachings and expectations of religions other than Christianity increased first with the scheme to import indentured Chinese labourers in the late 1840s and early 1850s, and then with the gold and later tin rushes which attracted people from many different places of origin. The Chinese were the most numerous and from the middle of the nineteenth century, their mixture of Confucian, Buddhist, Taoist, folklore traditions and ancestral worship could be witnessed in their celebrations of traditional Chinese festivals, the rites of passage associated with their burial of the dead, and the temples which were created in those centres with concentrations of Chinese residents.<sup>38</sup>

Colloquially referred to as 'joss houses', there were temples at Rocky River, Tingha and Emmaville. The last of the temples – one in Emmaville, one in Rocky River and two that were in Tingha – survived until 1910, 1912 and the 1930s respectively. The Emmaville and Rocky River temples burnt down; the one in Tingha was sold, its objects relocated.<sup>39</sup> Local commentaries, shared memories and surviving photographs and objects capture the richness of interiors, the colours of the buildings, and the nature of the religious practices.

Bessie Chiu and Ernest Sue Fong whose father, George Sue Fong, had a general store in Emmaville in the early part of the twentieth century recalled:

I'll tell you one thing about Emmaville - it had a beautiful joss house. The most beautiful joss house. People used to come and ask me in the shop "Excuse me could you tell me where the joss house is?" time and time again. It was a beautiful joss house and a beautiful garden they had. ... I can remember it had a great big Chinese umbrella in front of it, I can remember that. It had big idols and all that sort of thing. It was painted red on the outside. It was beautiful.<sup>40</sup>

... there was a big idol there, and we used to ... love going in there and looking at the idol ... My father was a Christian but he still had that

<sup>37</sup> Gilbert, *An Armidale Album*, pp.31-36.

<sup>38</sup> For an overview see Wilton, *Golden Threads*, pp.85-98.

<sup>39</sup> Ian Lobsey, 'The Creek', Emmaville, 1972, p.35; Arnold Goode, 'Tunnel, dredge and drought: the Rocky River, 1860-1900', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 27, 1984, p.5; Ian Handley, 'The Land of the McCrossins', Uralla, 1979, pp.7-8; Helen Brown, *Tin at Tingha*, Armidale, 1982, pp. 101-2.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Bessie Chiu, Gold Coast, 24 September 1991. Chinese in New England Project.

suspicion about himself, you know, he had that Buddha suspicion and when he used to go to Sydney to buy he used to go in there and ask the old priest what did he think - would it be safe for him to go down and buy, you know. ... and if they said "oh no, bit dangerous or something, that something's going to happen", he wouldn't go.<sup>41</sup>

The site of the Emmaville temple is marked by pine trees. It is on private property, and the site of at least one of the temples in Tingha has been identified: it is a vacant block.<sup>42</sup> The sites of the Rocky River temples have been levelled on a number of occasions. There are, fortunately, photographs of the Emmaville and Tingha temples.



View of one of the Tingha temples showing side quarters, 1890.<sup>43</sup>



Front and side views of the exterior of the Emmaville Temple.<sup>44</sup>

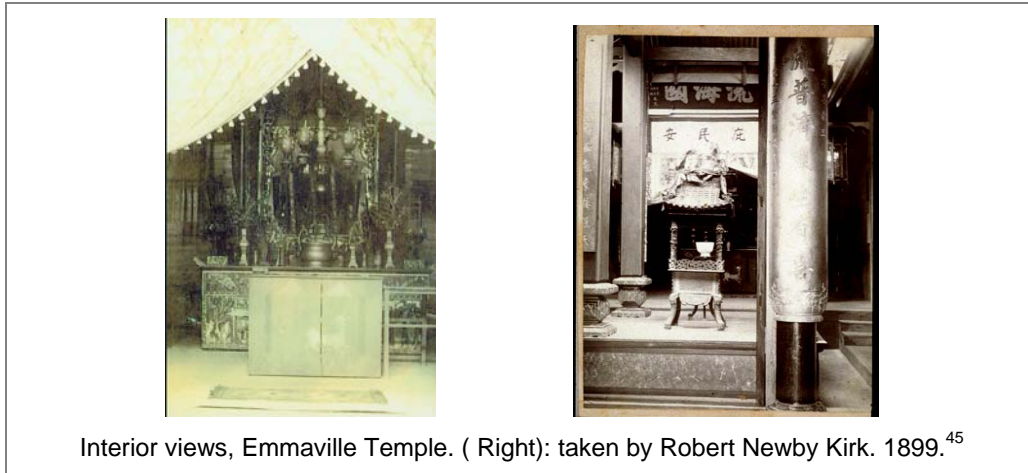
<sup>41</sup> Interview with Ernest Sue Fong, Inverell, 27 March 1990. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>42</sup> Rebecca Lin Yit, The archaeology of Chinese suburban settlement, BAHons thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 2005, pp.57-64 and pp.89-98.

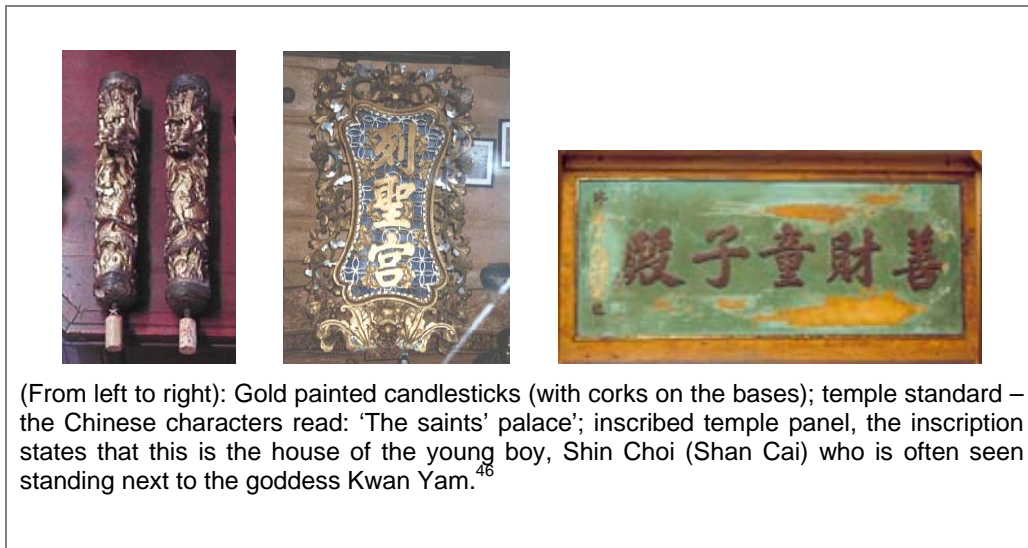
<sup>43</sup> Reproduced from Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, p.180. Identified as one of the temples by Yit, p.58.

<sup>44</sup> Reproduced from Lobsey, *The Creek*, p.36 and courtesy, Land of the Beardies History House.





Objects from the temples have also survived. Some are in private collections. Others are housed in local museums, and provide opportunities to view and sense the religious beliefs and practices which helped Chinese migrants to live in what was an alien environment – physically, socially, culturally, linguistically. They are also potent reminders that the history of religions and religious practices in New England is not solely a history of Christianity. For immigrants it includes other world religions, both mainstream and from the fringes. For all residents it also includes the rich and deep history of Indigenous traditions.



<sup>45</sup> View on the left from Lobsey, *The Creek*, p.35, and on the right Courtesy Deborah Malor.

<sup>46</sup> Wing Hing Long, Tingha; Smith's Museum, Green Valley Farm, Tingha; Private collection. Transliteration and translation by Doris Yau-Chong Jones.

**Reconstructed temple interior: McCrossins Mill Museum, Uralla**

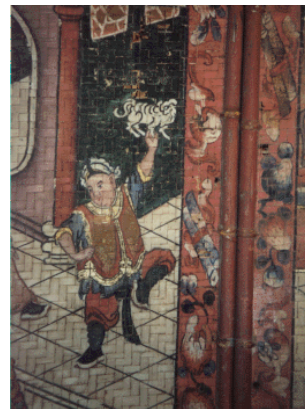
On the second floor of McCrossins Mill Museum, there is a reconstructed Chinese temple interior. Many of the objects on display were found in Tingha. They came from one of the Tingha temples, although it is thought that some may originally have been in one of the Rocky River temples and were taken north when tin attracted Chinese miners to the Tingha district.



McCrossins Mill Museum, Uralla.



View of part of the reconstructed Chinese temple.



God of longevity, temple bell, detail from a painted bamboo screen.



## Schools, Italian classes and a German Vice Chancellor

Caring for the health of the body and the soul was flanked by the growing acceptance of the need also to care for the growth and development of the mind. Good citizens, as that father of education Henry Parkes, so aptly observed are created through good education.<sup>47</sup> In colonial New South Wales the focus was particularly on providing schooling for all children. In New England, this saw the establishment of schools – public, denominational and private – throughout the region.<sup>48</sup> The idea was that all children should be able to acquire basic literacy, numeracy and other life skills. Not surprisingly, the language of these schools was English and a curriculum was developed that reflected the ‘national schools’ philosophy which was an English-Irish hybrid designed to overcome denominational differences.

For immigrant children from non-English-speaking backgrounds the schools were often their first or at least their most exposed experience of the ways of talking and living that were becoming Australian. And, through to the twenty-first century, schools have continued to play this role in immigrant lives.

In the colonial era, despite the growing emphasis on schooling, the children of farm labourers and unskilled workers were the least likely to attend school regularly, even more so when the children’s parents were newly arrived immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds. They were confronted by language and cultural barriers as well as by the need to establish a life and income in an alien land. When old enough, the children were more useful to their families in the workforce or assisting around the home and/or farm. To this end, many began their work lives early and in occupations similar to those of their immigrant parents.

Nineteenth century German settlers provide examples. John Drennert remembered being at school for only about a year as he was needed on his parents’ farm where he worked until he was about fourteen, and at an early age Charles and Harry Brauer followed in their father’s footsteps and worked as shepherds as did Peter and Anton Lasker.<sup>49</sup>

When they did attend school, grappling with a new language in a period when there was limited, if any, tolerance of languages other than English and when

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<sup>47</sup> D. Morris, ‘Henry Parkes: publicist and legislator’ in *Pioneers of Australian Education*, ed. Clifford Turney, Sydney, 1969, pp.162-163.

<sup>48</sup> Bruce Mitchell and Jean Newall, ‘Schools’ in *High Lean Country*, eds. Alan Atkinson *et.al.*, Sydney, 2006, pp.171-183; R.B.Walker, *Old New England*, Sydney, 1966, Chapter 11, pp.144-152.

<sup>49</sup> Norman Crawford, Notes from a conversation with John Drennert, 1944. Centenary Cottage Museum, Tenterfield; *Tenterfield Star*, 17 January 1855; Helen Nancarrow, *Brandscheid’s Vine*, Armidale, 2001, p.77.

people from different countries were frequently regarded as outsiders must have been daunting. Memories from the first part of the twentieth century and shared by the children of Chinese immigrants – and they could speak English – suggest the difficulties. When asked what school was like for her, Bessie Chiu who was born in 1912 and went to school in Emmaville, responded:

We used to get called names - Ching Chongs and all that. I used to bawl my head off. I had long plaits and they used to pull my hair and my other sister, Eva, used to come with her port: "You leave her alone!" But I was too timid. That's what it was and then ... they used to say to me "Go around Suey and eat more rice!"<sup>50</sup>



Members of the Sue Fong family, Emmaville, about 1920.<sup>51</sup>

Eileen Cum (nee Fay) similarly remembered her short time at school in Inverell:

At public school, they used to call out 'Ching Chong Chinaman' and other names. I'd go home crying and not want to go back to school. Dad'd talk me into going back.<sup>52</sup>

Despite the difficulties and despite the need for immigrants to focus on establishing lives in their new land, education was seen as important and as a part of community life. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some immigrant parents became involved with the schools in their localities. Christoph Eichorn, for example, was among those who applied for the creation of the Big Ridge School in 1881; David Fittler's property on the edge of Armidale had a school named 'Duval View' constructed on it; Charles

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Bessie Chiu, Gold Coast, 24 September 1991. Chinese in New England Project.

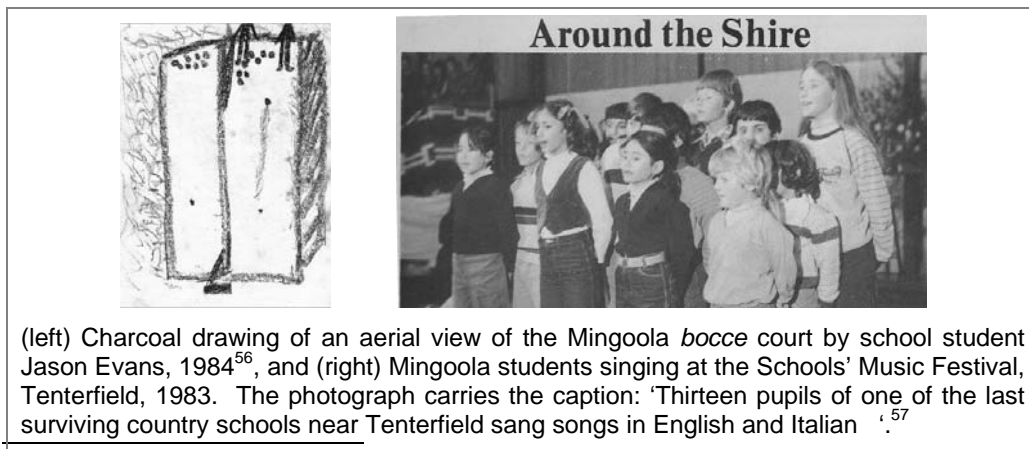
<sup>51</sup> Image courtesy Ernest Sue Fong.

<sup>52</sup> Eileen Cum, Pers. Communication, Warialda, 14 February 1984. Chinese in New England Project.

Pavel was an active member of the school board in Tenterfield; and Helena Post supported the petition for the establishment of a school at Kellys Plains near Armidale in 1902.<sup>53</sup> As well, the presence and achievements of the children of immigrants is recorded in school histories, honour boards, local memories and other records.<sup>54</sup>

These early patterns of attendance, prejudice, achievement and participation were patterns that continued throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. What changed were the government policies and teaching practices which, in turn, influenced the school experiences of immigrant children.

The new mass immigration programs after the Second World War coupled with the developments and innovations in teaching practice and curriculum from the 1960s, had an impact on schools in New England as elsewhere in New South Wales. The overt intolerance of earlier times was eventually replaced by policies requiring respect for cultural difference and the nurturing of community languages. This had particular impact in public schools like those at Ashford and Mingoola where there were concentrations of immigrant children during the height of tobacco farming. At both these schools in the 1980s, initiatives were taken to introduce Italian language programs and books, and to involve parents in the school's activities. At Mingoola, a *bocce* court was built next to the school and school events included spaghetti eating competitions and international nights.<sup>55</sup>



(left) Charcoal drawing of an aerial view of the Mingoola *bocce* court by school student Jason Evans, 1984<sup>56</sup>, and (right) Mingoola students singing at the Schools' Music Festival, Tenterfield, 1983. The photograph carries the caption: 'Thirteen pupils of one of the last surviving country schools near Tenterfield sang songs in English and Italian'.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Nancarrow, *Brandscheid's Vine*, pp.43-45 and 47-48; Armidale Family History Group, *Pioneer Register of New England*, Armidale, 2003, pp.90 and 98; Norman Crawford, Notes from a conversation with Charles Pavel's son, Charles, 1942. Tenterfield Centenary Cottage.

<sup>54</sup> For example, 1988: *A Tingha Public School Reunion*, Tingha, 1988.

<sup>55</sup> Janis Wilton, Field notes, 1984 and 1985. Immigrants in the Bush Project.; Helen Andreoni, *It's Like Building a Road Over a Swamp*.

<sup>56</sup> Immigrants in the Bush Project. The drawing was one of a number produced by students at the Mingoola School in response to the Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>57</sup> *Tenterfield Star*, 2 September 1983.

Italian language classes were also introduced in Armidale at Newling Public School and Armidale City Public School. Armidale City Public provided the venue for the after school community language Greek classes sponsored and supported by the Greek community in Armidale.<sup>58</sup> A precursor to this thematic history was developed – and funded by the department of education – as classroom materials on the complex and rich immigrant heritage of rural areas.<sup>59</sup> This was the heyday of multiculturalism: official support was expressed through policies and resources.

Schools were not the only places affected by the changing populations and policies of the later twentieth century. Technical colleges took on board the need to provide English language classes for immigrants, and Armidale College of Advanced Education introduced graduate diplomas dedicated to multicultural education and the teaching of English as a second language.<sup>60</sup>

Another noticeable impact of the official shedding of intolerance and Australia's growing adjustment to its place in Asia combined this time with a clear financial incentive, is the increasing number of international students attending the University of New England. From the days of the Colombo Plan to the late twentieth century attractiveness of Asian students as full-fee paying students in an environment in which universities are progressively starved of public funding, the university has sought to capture new international markets. This has involved the development of specialist services including the establishment of an English language training school, the provision of suitable accommodation and support services, and the proliferation of schemes to establish overseas centres and links.<sup>61</sup>



Thana Bisalputra teaching a botany class at UNE, 1960.

'The first overseas student ever to attend the University of New England, in Armidale, Australia, Mr Thana Bisalputra, of Thailand, is now employed at the university as a demonstrator. He completed his Bachelor of Science degree with honours. Mr Bisalputra, (centre), teaching a botany class in a hot-house at the university.'<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Armidale Express*, 9 January 1987.

<sup>59</sup> Janis Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush* (resource package), Armidale, 1988/1989. For an overview of the project see Janis Wilton 'Immigrants in the bush' in *New England for Non-English-Speakers*, ed. Helen Noyes, Armidale, 1983, pp.34-47.

<sup>60</sup> Helen Noyes, *New England for Non-English Speakers*; Matthew Jordan, *A Spirit of True Learning*, Sydney, 2004, p.211.

<sup>61</sup> 'International students', *University of New England*, <http://www.une.edu.au/for/international-students/>

<sup>62</sup> NAA: A1501, A2312/1

The university also provides a case study on the increasing presence of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds in the professions and in other areas of employment. From its establishment as a University of Sydney College in 1938 and then as a university in its own right in 1954 and its amalgamation with Armidale College of Advanced Education in 1990, the university along with private and public schools and technical education have played an increasingly important part in the economic life of Armidale and the wider region. In 1976, for example, 4,118 full-time students were living in the city and attending one or other of the tertiary education institutions, a further 5,533 were part-time and/or distance education students and approximately 2,000 residents were directly dependent on the education industry for their full-time employment with the majority being in the tertiary sector.<sup>63</sup>

As a major employer in the region the university has, among its academic as well as other staff, employed Australians who were born and who were often trained in countries outside the English-speaking world. They include people like Giovanni Andreoni, Herman Beyersdorff, Zihni Buzo, Ann-Katrin Eckermann, Kiyoo and Kumie Fujimori, Linda Liecht-Hesse, Gerhard Koertner, Franko Leoni, Kurt Loewald, Takasha Takayama. And there is German-born Ingrid Moses who was Vice-Chancellor from 1997 to 2006.<sup>64</sup> Their presence coupled with the increased number of overseas students largely explains the different demographic profile of Armidale in the late twentieth and at the beginning of the twenty-first centuries compared to the other towns on the Tableland. Armidale has a more culturally diverse population.<sup>65</sup>



Dr Gustav Schroeder, Department of Physics, University of New England, 1962.

From a collection entitled 'Immigration – migrants in the professions'. Accompanying details note that Dr Schroeder was a graduate in natural sciences of Hamburg University, Germany, and that he was working on a research project on spark discharges.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> J.M.R. Cameron, 'Education' in *An Atlas of New England Volume 2: The Commentaries*, Armidale, 1977, pp.277-278.

<sup>64</sup> See entries in *Different Sights* online database.

<sup>65</sup> Birthplace tables, 2006 Census, Australian Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/Census+data>.

<sup>66</sup> NAA: A12111, 1/1962/29/20.

Another feature of Armidale that helps to make its demographic and economic patterns and life different, is the significant role of other educational institutions. In 2008, Armidale is the only centre in the region to retain its mixture of denominational (four) and public (two) secondary schools. Three of the four denominational schools have, like the university, actively sought students from overseas.<sup>67</sup> In their history of PLC Armidale, Catherine Pound and Alan Atkinson document the early initiatives by Dora Humby (School Principal 1959-1962) to attract and cater for Asian students, the ambivalent and sometimes adverse reactions from the school community, the increasing economic incentives behind seeking overseas students and the evolution of a more tolerant culture.<sup>68</sup>



Overseas students at PLC Armidale with staff member, Jenny Sholl, 1988. In the photograph are (from left, back row) Doris Ip, Vony Sugiarto, Mrs Sholl, Ruth Chow, Joanna Fung and (from left, in front) Sharon Ng and Elis Chong.<sup>69</sup>

Schools, technical colleges, the university and their students reflect the changing composition of the countries of origins of immigrants on the Tableland who have come from non-English-speaking backgrounds and, perhaps more than any other institutions, also reflect the changes in government policies and practices. As attitudes and policies have changed, curricula and activities have altered. Even for those schools where the percentage of Australians from non-English-speaking backgrounds is small, there have been requirements to teach tolerance, cultural awareness and to learn about Australia's place in a world that is no longer dominated by its colonial relationship with Britain.

<sup>67</sup> 'International students', *The Armidale School (TAS)*, <http://www.tas.edu.au/admissions/overseas.php> ; 'International', *New England Girls School (NEGS)*, <http://www.negs.nsw.edu.au/> ; 'International students', *PLC Armidale*, <http://www.plcarmidale.nsw.edu.au/index.php?main=1&sec=8>

<sup>68</sup> Catherine Pound and Alan Atkinson, *The Common Task*, Armidale, 1995, pp.152-153 and pp.212-214.

<sup>69</sup> From Pound and Atkinson, *The Common Task*, p.212.

## COMMUNITY, CREATIVITY AND HERITAGE

Immigrants have primarily first come to the Tableland for work. Time is spent earning a living and making a life. Work so often dominates. Then, as spaces appear between the hours of working and as families and individuals have needs that go beyond earning the money to put food on the table and a roof over their heads, social life and leisure pursuits evolve. The challenge for immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds in a rural area like the New England Tableland is that, with a few exceptions, the numbers of settlers from similar cultural backgrounds and speaking the same language have always been small. As a result, purpose built premises to house the formal social clubs and community organizations that become a part of the lives and support networks of ethnic communities in metropolitan centres are rare. Instead, there are informal networks and an increased need to participate in local community events that encompass residents from different backgrounds.

Immigrants also bring with them creative talents and aspirations which are put to work to fill the times away from paid employment, to keep alive links to homes and traditions from elsewhere, to capture the impact and nature of new lives and new environments, and to pass on experiences and skills to the following generations and to wider audiences. It becomes the responsibility and, in the latter part of the twentieth century, a desire of members of the second and subsequent generations and of local communities to keep alive the stories and contributions.

### **A German club, a state parliamentarian and football**

Among the small number of formal ethnic community organizations established on the Tableland, are the German Club which appeared momentarily in Armidale in the early 1890s and the branch of the Chinese Masonic Society that was in Tingha in the early twentieth century.

The published objectives of the German Club hint at the desires within the local German community to establish a culturally sympathetic environment in which members could meet socially, speak in German, 'transact business ... and in fact to obtain that social recreation that they feel is unobtainable in any of the existing institutions in the town'.<sup>1</sup> The experiment was short lived,

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<sup>1</sup> *Armidale Express*, 10 June 1892

victim it seems to the litigation and infighting that seemed to characterise the lives of the German settlers at this time.<sup>2</sup>

The Tingha branch of the Chinese Masonic Society, according to local knowledge, survived into the post Second World War period. Certainly, in 1952, a local newspaper report mentioned an attempt by residents to prevent the Department of Lands selling the building due to the 'hardship which would be experienced by an aged Chinese tenant'.<sup>3</sup> It became the last remaining community centre for local Chinese residents and it is believed that furnishings from the last of the temples in the town were transferred to the Masonic Society premises in 1910 when the temple closed.<sup>4</sup>

The existence of the Chinese Masonic Society is indicative of the support services and social centres that developed around the many Chinese migrants who spent at least a part of their lives in mining towns like Tingha. The Chinese Masonic Society had its origins in Chinese secret political societies that were present on the nineteenth century goldfields. By the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, it had evolved into an organization whose premises could provide meeting places for fellow countrymen, and protection and assistance especially for the decreasing numbers of Chinese who were in regional areas.<sup>5</sup>

Other formal ethnic community organizations did have a presence although, it seems, no purpose built premises on the Tableland. The Australian Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), established in Scone, New South Wales, in 1935 provided a structured means for keeping Greeks in touch with Greeks as they scattered across rural areas.<sup>6</sup> Eleni Dedes recalls from her youth in 1930s and 1940s Uralla and Armidale:

One Sunday a month, they'd [AHEPA] arrange to go to a different town. The men would have a meeting in the afternoon and at night, they would sort of have a party and dance. That's how young people got to know each other and there were a lot of marriages arranged there... The area here was from Scone or Singleton to Tenterfield, Moree, all around there. They'd ring each other and say there's a meeting.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Alan Atkinson and John Aitchison, 'Colonial settlement' in *High Lean Country*, ed. Alan Atkinson *et.al*, Sydney, 2006, p.154.

<sup>3</sup> *Armidale Express*, 6 June 1952.

<sup>4</sup> Helen Brown, *Tin at Tingha*, Armidale, 1982, p.101

<sup>5</sup> John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie*, Sydney, 2007, Chapter 4.

<sup>6</sup> Janis Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Cafés and Caféowners*, Armidale, 1989, p.74.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Eleni Dedes, Armidale, 25 October 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.



Within the Chinese community, there were a number of Sydney based organizations which through correspondence and visits provided support and made demands on Chinese residents especially the more successful businessmen in the region. Harry Fay (Louie Mew Fay) of the Hong Yuen store in Inverell, for example, was Chairman of the Chinese Residents Society of Nor'west New South Wales and a member of the NSW Chinese Chamber of Commerce. He had regular contact with leading figures in the Sydney Chinese community, brought dignitaries to Inverell and was active in raising funds for Chinese community appeals.<sup>8</sup>



Sydney Chinese community dignitaries with Fay family members and other members of the Inverell Chinese community, about 1941.<sup>9</sup> Note the Kuo Min Tang flag in the background.



The Lebanese community similarly hosted visits from dignitaries. This photo shows Sheike Antoine Stephan in Inverell on his Royal Tour of Australia's Lebanese communities in 1938.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Janis Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Hong Yuen*, Armidale, 1988, pp.58-60.

<sup>9</sup> Image courtesy of Marina Mar.

<sup>10</sup> Courtesy Emil Haddad. The image was on display in the '120 years of Kfarsghab Migration' display held at AKA House, Sydney, in 2007 and was used in an online *Sydney Morning Herald* audio-visual piece on the display

These ethnic community organization networks were supplemented by less formal networks, some focusing on immigrants' villages of origin, and all providing opportunities to meet socially and for young people to meet (and marry) others from their own cultural backgrounds. Joe Hanna, for example, recalled the gatherings held by Lebanese settlers from the village of Kfarsghab during the 1920s and 1930s. For northern New South Wales the destination was just across the Queensland border in Toowoomba – 'a big centre ... for our village'.

... see Dad [Moses Hanna] used to go to Toowoomba to a lot of weddings ... and if any [were your relatives] up you went, and then you'd meet the girls and, you know... Well, my cousin married a girl from Toowoomba, I married a girl from Toowoomba and my first cousin married a girl from Toowoomba.<sup>11</sup>

Closer to home social life was created by visiting neighbours and neighbouring towns. Sam Woo, who worked and lived at Hong Yuen in Inverell during the 1930s, recalled visiting friends in Tingha and spending evenings there:

I was the only one that had a car at the time. We'd pack into the car and go out there. We had friends [the Kays, Tet Fongs] out at Tingha. There were old dams out there they had for mining. They used to be full of water. We'd put these cork floats on and go and swim in the dam with the geese and the ducks.

Mrs Tet Fong, ... was a great old cook. She'd always have a big tea there and invited us boys over with the whole of her family ... There were quite a few families used to do that. Have tea out there and have a sing-song around the piano and that sort of thing ... and go home at night.<sup>12</sup>

And in 1980s Armidale, Maroula Pavlou described weekly gatherings among the local Greek community:

Here in Armidale, we get together once a week. About eight or nine families. One Monday it's my place, another Monday it's another place. We have Greek parties if something important comes up. We'd get one hundred and fifty ... Greek people in Armidale.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Joseph Hanna, Armidale, 31 August 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Sam Woo, Wyoming NSW, 25 July 1990. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Harris and Maroula Pavlou, Armidale, 3 November 1983. Immigrants in the Bush Project.



Members of Armidale's Greek community inside Nick's Cafe, Armidale, about 1959.<sup>14</sup>

John Tzannes posted this photograph on [www.kythera-family.net](http://www.kythera-family.net) with the following comment:

'Armidale NSW was one of many regional cities and country towns fortunate to have a thriving and socially active Greek community. This photo was taken around 1959 at Nick's Cafe, one of many gatherings organised by the local community where families spanning three generations attended. Family names such as Tzannes, Calligeros, Lourandos, Psaltis, Comino, Coolentianos, Anest, Ferros, Pavlo, Cassimatis bring back fond memories. Armidale was blessed with a very large population of Kytherians. My childhood in Armidale is one that I will always cherish. I am the little boy under the photo of the Queen, sticking his head out from behind Tony Calligeros holding his son Angelo.'

Creating and maintaining social lives contained within ethnic community boundaries provides the opportunities to keep alive language and cultural traditions, to operate within familiar social and cultural environments, and to ensure that children at least have some exposure to their migrant heritages. It is also often a necessity in a new world which is often unwelcoming. As Nick Mentis recalled of his early years in Tenterfield:

Back in those days, when I first came to Australia, we had an inferiority complex, well, I did, because well, I had black hair, black moustache, curly hair ... The Australians weren't as broadminded as they are today ... If you'd speak in those days, oh, they'd abuse you. They'd try to do something to stir you up.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Courtesy John Tzannes.

<sup>15</sup> Janis Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Cafés and Caféowners*, Armidale, 1989, p.45.

Similarly, Australian-born Albert Yum described the impact of prejudice on the social lives of the young Chinese men who, during the 1930s, found work at the Hong Yuen store in Inverell:

Albert Yum : ...One of the sad points of all this I reckon was, here we were 20 or 30 boys, most of us bachelors and no girls, no courting. No social life at all. Well, ... at Inverell they had a dance every Friday night.. and later, at Tingha, when Tommy Young converted a place there for a dance paladium. We went there once or twice but that was a bit too far to go - there were no buses or anything.

Janis Wilton : And would you go to the Friday night dance in Inverell?

Albert Yum : No. We had no girlfriends to take.

Janis Wilton : And so you couldn't meet girls there?

Albert Yum : It wouldn't be acceptable. Cruel in a way but that's the only thing I had against the country.<sup>16</sup>

The pull of traditions from within ethnic communities and the pressure of being treated as 'other' by the wider Australian community did not, however, mean a total withdrawal into the perceived safety of an ethnic enclave. The small number of individuals and families from the same cultural background in specific localities and, indeed, in the region militated against this for some families. As Keith Woo explained:

We grew up in a town where there were very few Chinese. Our friends weren't Chinese. We didn't keep up these ties.<sup>17</sup>

Staying in a locality has often also meant becoming involved with local community organizations. Business interests, and welfare and social needs could be served by active participation in the local show society, community support of local schools, local sporting organizations, and local service and welfare groups. Chinese names, for example, from early on appear among the regular and generous contributors to hospital funds.<sup>18</sup> Prominent

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Albert Yum, Sydney, 5 July 1989. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Sam Woo.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, lists of donors to the local hospital in *Glen Innes Examiner*, 16 July 1897 and 18 August 1903, and the Glen Innes Hospital Donors' Board in the Land of the Beardies History House Museum.

businessmen such as Jonathan Utz, John Sommerlad, and Harry Fay were to be found on the boards of community organizations.<sup>19</sup>

Immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds and their descendants also appear as local councillors and, by the late twentieth century, as the region's elected representative to state parliament. Names here include Claude Cainero (Armidale), Carl Kautz (Inverell), John Henry Sommerlad (Tenterfield), Herman Beyersdorff (Armidale), J.F. Utz (Glen Innes), Cornelius Seckold (Walcha), and E. Lloyd Sommerlad and Richard Torbay (NSW state parliament).<sup>20</sup>

This venturing into the world outside the safety of ethnic community networks, also applies to the participation of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds in sporting activities. There are early reports of Chinese being allowed to join horse races, if only for the fun of being able to laugh at what was perceived as their quaint horsemanship.<sup>21</sup> The children of Chinese migrants appear regularly in local football teams in the region, as do members of the Greek community.<sup>22</sup> At Dundee, members of the German families there can be seen playing the very English game of cricket.<sup>23</sup> And, turning the tables and indicative of the impact of multiculturalism at a local level, in the 1980s at Mingoola local Australian-born residents joined their immigrant neighbours to play the Italian game of *bocce*.



Armidale soccer team with the Acropolis Cup, about 1956.<sup>24</sup>

Eleni Dedes recalled that 'most of the players were European' and that the cup had been donated by two Greeks from Gunnedah.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> 'Death of Mr J.F. Utz', *Glen Innes Examiner*, 8 July 1912; Sommerlad file, First Families Project, Tenterfield Centenary Cottage; Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Hong Yuen*, pp.60-62.

<sup>20</sup> See entries in *Different Sights* online database.

<sup>21</sup> Ken Halliday, *Call of the Highlands*, Tenterfield, 1988, pp.111-112.

<sup>22</sup> Wilton, *Immigrants in the Bush: Hong Yuen*, pp.45 and 64; Interview with Eleni Dedes.

<sup>23</sup> Eileen Hartmann, *Dundee*, Dundee, 1979, pp.168-169.

<sup>24</sup> Photograph and caption courtesy Eleni Dedes.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Eleni Dedes.



Dundee cricket team, 1885.<sup>26</sup>

Team members included H. Hunold, Bill Kiehne, Gustav Hartmann, Richard Hartmann, Fred Hartmann, Herman Hartmann.



Playing *bocce*, Mingoola, mid-1980s.<sup>27</sup>

### **A Chinese band, a Polish poet, and Japanese potters**

Community and social life, sport and leisure have been flanked by the maintenance and adaptation of creative traditions and skills immigrants brought with them and by their acquisition and expression of new forms of creativity.

Folklorist Barry McDonald notes that the Rocky River goldfields had a number of visits from a German quadrille band.<sup>28</sup> German-born John Sommerlad established Tenterfield's first brass band with his sons supplying most of the

<sup>26</sup> From Hartmann, *Dundee*, p.168.

<sup>27</sup> Immigrants in the Bush Photograph Collection.

<sup>28</sup> Barry McDonald, 'New England folk music', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 42, 1999, p.29.

musicians.<sup>29</sup> In Emmaville, members of the Chinese community formed their own band which performed for Chinese festivals and on other occasions. A photograph has the band posing with their distinctly Chinese instruments.<sup>30</sup> In Tingha, local Chinese resident, saddler and boot repairer, Harry Howchin, was the bandmaster of the town band for many years and trained a number of the band musicians.<sup>31</sup>



Emmaville's Chinese band, early twentieth century.<sup>32</sup>  
Note the Chinese drum in the foreground.

As immigration, travel, improved international transport and communications, and globalisation opened New England to a wider world in the latter part of the twentieth century, it also brought to the region a wider variety of artists, performers, writers and musicians. Some were visitors passing through on a quick tour or for a workshop; others settled. Among them were immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

At the summer schools held at the University of New England, for example, local residents could be exposed to the art, instruction and different cultural backgrounds of acclaimed Australian artists like Slovenian-born Stanislaus Rapotec, Hungarian-born Desiderius Orban, and Japanese-born Shiga Shigeo.<sup>33</sup> At the New England Regional Art Museum, from 1984 to 2004, under the directorship of Israeli-born Joe Eisenberg, local residents could meet an increasing range of Australian art and artists from non-English-speaking backgrounds. As a reflection of his own immigrant background and in order to complement the existing collections with different approaches to Australian art, Eisenberg intentionally sought donations of art from and by

<sup>29</sup> *Tenterfield Star*, 25 November 1957.

<sup>30</sup> Ian Lobsey, *The Creek*, Emmaville, 1972, pp.34-35.

<sup>31</sup> *Tingha Advocate*, 11 January and 17 May 1918.

<sup>32</sup> From I Lobsey, *The Creek*, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> Meg Vivers, 'Visual arts' in *High Lean Country*, ed. Alan Atkinson et. al., Sydney, 2006, p. 352.

immigrant artists. There were visits, exhibitions and art acquisitions from, for example, Asher Bilu, Graham Kuo, Aida Tomescu and Salvatore Zofrea.<sup>34</sup>

Other individual artists, writers and musicians have also spent time in the region, some have settled there, and some have overtly incorporated their responses to living in rural New South Wales and particularly in New England in their creative endeavours. The latter group includes poet Peter Skryznecki who was born in the Displaced Persons Camps in Germany after the Second World War to Ukrainian/Polish refugee parents and who had his first teaching appointment at Jeogla Public School and subsequently studied at the University of New England. His early poems draw both on his immigrant background and on his first encounters with New England.<sup>35</sup>

Writer Giovanni Andreoni settled in the region as an employee of the University of New England. His writing – in Italian – lyrically captures his love/hate relationship with Australia and, as well, exudes his familiarity with and despair for the ravaged land he lives in and travels through.

*Immensi spazi che si mimetizzano tra loro, labirinto che si ripete continuamente, paesaggio che è un oppiaceo per il cervello.*

*Mosca, regina sovrana. Milliard di mosche lucenti ed allegre, m'entrano in bocca, nel naso, nelle orecchie. La grande carcassa se ne va lentamente tra le voci degli elementi da secoli, per secoli.*

*Perchè queste case con finestre senza scuri? Perchè questi occhi senza palpebre? Perchè questo voler essere abbacinati, annientati dalla luce piatta, possente, senza sfumature?*

*Ho cercato di ricrearvi un angolo della mia terra per ottenere che cosa? Una foto stereotipata, una cartolina che tu Australia ignori.*

Immense spaces which evaporate into each other, endlessly recurring mazes; landscape which numbs the brain.

The fly, sovereign queen. Millions of shiny, dancing flies enter my mouth, my nose, my ears. Your huge carcass has been fading into the silence of the elements for centuries.

Why these houses without windows? Why these eyes without lids? Why this wish to be dazzled, destroyed by the flat powerful light which knows no softness?

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<sup>34</sup> Joe Eisenberg, Personal communication, 2008.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Peter Skryznecki, *There, Behind the Lids*, Sydney, 1970; *Immigrant Chronicle*, Brisbane, 1975; and *The Aviary*, Sydney, 1978.



I have tried to recreate in you a corner of my own country. For what?  
A mere photograph, a post-card which you Australia ignore.<sup>36</sup>

Japanese-born potters, Kiyotaka and Kumiko Hashimoto selected Armidale as a new base for both bringing up their daughters and for producing their ceramics. Regular exhibitions in Japan are complemented by regular local exhibitions and sales. They also act as hosts for Japanese visitors to the locality. Their ceramics reflect their Japanese training and heritage and their awareness of their Australian environment. As Kiyotaka Hashimoto says:

I wish to show the innate energy and pure colours of the Australian environment, but also to create spiritual overtones in the works.<sup>37</sup>

Outside this world of practicing artists and writers, there are also immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds who have continued with their traditional creative crafts and art. An example comes from the Sardinian community that grew around the tobacco-growing industry in Ashford in the 1960s and 1970s. The women in the community brought with them a traditional Sardinian weaving technique known as *pibiones*. At first, they were without looms, so they kept the patterns alive through doing them in cross stitch. With access to looms they revived their weaving. A particular impetus came from a project initiated by Helen Andreoni from the Armidale CAE. Concerned to address the physical, social and cultural isolation of the women, Andreoni set up an Italian language program at the local school and, with the assistance of the local community and some government funding, established a Craft Cooperative where the Sardinian women could share their weaving skills with other residents. A number of the traditionally woven textiles were made and some were exhibited in Armidale.<sup>38</sup>



Textile panel woven using the *pibiones* technique by Giovanna Sera, Ashford, 1980s.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Helen Andreoni, 'From Giovanni to Gio: fighting the stereotype' in *Australia in Transition: Culture and Life Possibilities*, eds. Millicent E. Poole et.al., Sydney, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985, pp.168-172.

<sup>37</sup> 'Hashimoto, Kiyotaka', *Japan Foundation*, <http://www.jpf.org.au/jartists/h/kiyohashimoto/kiyohashimoto.htm>

<sup>38</sup> Helen Andreoni, 'The Ashford Sardinian Craft Co-operative', *Italian Cultural Activities*, December 1981, pp. 8-9; and Helen Andreoni, 'Looms for language learning', *Education News*, 17/10, April 1982, pp.22-26.

<sup>39</sup> Private collection.

Chinese-born calligraphy artist, Cuncun Wu has taken her art and is teaching it at the University of New England. In 2007, her 25 students produced an exhibition displaying the ways in which they had used their very new calligraphy skills. One student, Frank Murphy, took the Dorothea Mackellar line 'I love a sunburnt country' and created a Chinese version 'inspired by the contribution of Chinese settlers to the development of outback Australia'.<sup>40</sup>

Writing, art, crafts and other creative endeavours pursued by immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds link the Tableland to cultural traditions and practices that extend beyond British and English-speaking styles and approaches. They also provide insights into the different ways in which immigrants have responded to their new environments in Australia and in New England.

### **Family stories, ethnic community histories and local museums**

For a long time, the presence of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds in New England was primarily acknowledged through passing references – often negative – in local newspaper reports and local histories. From the late 1970s, however, the descendants of these immigrants – like their counterparts elsewhere in Australia – have increasingly shown an interest in their family histories and in making their heritage known to a wider public. At the same time, local historians and local museums have more overtly researched, documented and presented the diverse contributions from non-British migrants. Their history and heritage is emerging from the shadows.

Among families, in 1986, E Lloyd Sommerlad researched and published *The Migrant Shepherd*, the story of his German-born grandfather, John Henry Sommerlad.<sup>41</sup> His concern to locate his grandfather amongst the pioneers of the Tenterfield district is captured in ending the book with a quote from his father, Ernest Christian Sommerlad, who had written a tribute under the title 'The pioneer – struggles to success'. The quote reads:

Of such stuff were our forefathers made – the men and women who faced nature in the raw, and the virgin forest carved out a path where later toilers followed, all unsuspecting of the labours, the hardships and the heartbreaks, with which those early struggles were baptised. But of such stuff are heroes made, even if they be but the heroes of the soil.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> University of New England media release, 16 June 2007.

<sup>41</sup> E. Lloyd Sommerlad, *The Migrant Shepherd*, Sydney, 1986.

<sup>42</sup> Sommerlad, *The Migrant Shepherd*, p.150.

In researching his family history, Sommerlad had access to a wealth of family memories, documents and memorabilia. By contrast, Monica Tankey, Ray Poon, Marie Hunnam and others who have gone in search of their Chinese ancestry have had much more difficult tasks.<sup>43</sup> Chinese ancestry was often hidden within families; the official records provide, at best, names and variations of names bearing little resemblance to either original Chinese names or the names by which ancestors became known; and family memorabilia and documents are sparse. They have been searching and tracking in order to reconnect to their Chinese heritage, and their activities and concerns are reflective of the broader growing interest as ethnic communities have been establishing their own historical societies. Among those now operating from Sydney are the Chinese Australian Historical Society, the Lebanese Historical Society, [kythera-family.net](http://www.kythera-family.net), and the Australian Kfarsghab Association.<sup>44</sup> Through websites, seminars, workshops, publications these historical societies provide support and credibility for work on the histories of immigrants from specific non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Also reflective of this developing focus on and support for ethnic community and family histories as they affect New England is the work of Peter McCarthy in Inverell as he has documented and described the Greeks and Greek cafés in his locality; Stan Correy's interviews with his mother and aunt and his visit to Lebanon; Paul Eichorn's work tracking the histories of his German ancestors and their German community in and around Armidale; the genealogical research shared through family history websites; the family items placed in local museums; and the family and business reunions and commemorations.<sup>45</sup>

Flanking the interest from within families and ethnic communities, has been a growing awareness of the need to populate New England local histories not just with English or Scottish pioneering pastoralists and townsmen and their institutions and practices but to include settlers from different class and

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<sup>43</sup> Monica Tankey, 'Armidale and the Amoy labourers', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 29, 1986, pp.74-76; Ray Poon, 'It has made me whole' in *Plantings in a New Land*, ed. Chek Ling, Brisbane, 2001, pp.53-61; and Interview with Marie Hunnam, Mudgereeba, 25 September 1991. Chinese in New England Project.

<sup>44</sup> Chinese-Australian Historical Society, <http://www.hermes.net.au/cahs/>; Australian Lebanese Historical Society, <http://www.alhs.org.au/>; [kythera-family.net](http://www.kythera-family.net), <http://www.kythera-family.net/>; Australian Kfarsghab Association, <http://www.kfarsghab.com.au/>

<sup>45</sup> For example, Peter Makarthis (Peter McCarthy), Kytherians of Inverell NSW Australia, Presentation to 2nd Symposium Kytheraismos, Canberra, September 2006, <http://www.kythera-family.net>; Stanley Correy and Tom Zubrzycki in *Homeland*, ed. George Papaellinas, Sydney, 1991, pp. 66-82; Paul Eichorn, 'Henry Dangar's twenty German workmen in Australia', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 50, 2007, pp.23-30; *Family Ties*, <http://hrc.une.edu.au/heritagefutures/familyties/>.

cultural backgrounds. Elizabeth Wiedemann's two volumes on Inverell, for example, include discrete sections on the Chinese and Germans, and in her chapter on Ashford she spends time outlining the development of the tobacco industry and the roles immigrants played in that.<sup>46</sup> Helen Nancarrow's *Brandscheid's Vine* presents the family histories and settlement stories of the German migrants, among others, who settled in a particular locality near Armidale.<sup>47</sup> Mary Kneipp's work on the Ursuline sisters has resulted in carefully researched and constructed brief life stories for each of these German-born women who came to Armidale in the late nineteenth century.<sup>48</sup>

The work of members of the *Different Sights* project team have also contributed. In the mid-1980s, a number of individuals and families shared their migration and family histories with Janis Wilton for use in the school resource package, *Immigrants in the Bush*. Built from oral history interviews, family photographs, letters and other source, the package offers brief life stories, family histories, and thematic narratives about the contributions of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds on the Tableland.<sup>49</sup> This project spilled into an extended look at the history of the Chinese in New England and beyond.<sup>50</sup> Graham Wilson, for almost thirty years, has been immersed in the history and heritage of the region. En route, he has documented, for example, the work of Czech-born photographer, Joseph Check; the backgrounds and business interests of Russian-born Jew Colman Savage who established a mercery and tailoring business first in Hillgrove and then in Armidale; and tracked the history of Greeks across the region.<sup>51</sup>

Local councils and tourism centres have also assisted. In Tenterfield, the establishment of a partner city relationship with Ottobeuren in Germany is partly a recognition of the role played by German settlers in the district. The display commemorating this partnership housed in the Tenterfield Tourist Centre includes a list of the family names of German settlers in Tenterfield. The Centenary of Federation Memorial Walkway and First Families project similarly includes the names of many settlers from non-English-speaking

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<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Wiedemann, *World of its Own*, Inverell, 1981 and *Holding its Own*, Inverell, 1998.

<sup>47</sup> Helen Nancarrow, *Brandscheid's Vine*, Armidale, 2001.

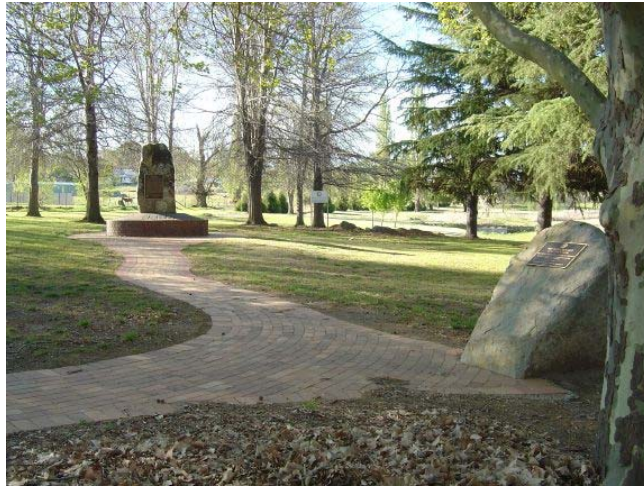
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<sup>50</sup> Janis Wilton, *Chinese Voices*, Australian Lives, PhD, Armidale, 1996; Janis Wilton, 'Chinese immigrants to Australia' in *Past Masters*, Stroud Gloucestershire, 2001, pp.425-434; Janis Wilton, *Golden Threads*, Sydney, 2004.

<sup>51</sup> Graham Wilson, 'Joseph Check, travelling photographer', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 31, 1988, pp. 77-86; Graham Wilson, 'The Savage family', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, 44, 2000, pp. 44-64; Graham Wilson, Greek communities in New England. Unpublished paper to annual conference of the Armidale Family History Group, October 2005.

backgrounds, particularly Germans, although the Battaglinis from Italy and the Hons from China have their memorial bricks lining the pathway.<sup>52</sup>



Immigrant Pioneer Monument and Welcome Walkway, Millbrook Park, Tenterfield, 2007.

This growing interest by family members, local historians and local councils in the diversity of the presence and contributions of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds has also influenced some of the local museums in the region. Overt examples include the Land of the Beardies History House Museum in Glen Innes where, from early on, there have been displays on the Utz store and mill and on the Kwong Sing store as part of a room devoted to the town's commercial entrepreneurs. Among other items on display – though not always clearly labelled – there is also the significant collection of carpentry tools and the workbench that were used by the Chinese carpenters who worked from the back of the Kwong Sing store.



Kwong Sing display, Land of the Beardies History House Museum.

<sup>52</sup> The paper records for the project are held in Tenterfield Centenary Cottage.

At the award-winning McCrossins Mill Museum in Uralla, the second floor of the museum has, since 1983, been devoted to the Chinese presence on the nearby Rocky River goldfields. The display includes items uncovered by amateur archaeologists at unidentified sites on the goldfields; a re-creation of a temple utilising items located in Tingha and thought originally to have come from one of the Rocky River temples, as well as items used in Armidale and some fairly new pieces; and a reconstructed timber miner's shaft thought to have been used by Chinese miners. With red painted walls, the display also highlights the suspicion and prejudice with which the Chinese were greeted and, in incorrectly labelling a water pipe as an opium pipe, suggests the lack of information about the Chinese presence available at the time the display was created.

In Tingha, there is the Wing Hing Long Store Museum. Built in the 1880s to service what was a thriving tin mining community, the store was in Chinese-Australian ownership from its establishment until 1998 when it was acquired with the assistance of the NSW Heritage Office by the Guyra Shire Council to run as a community managed museum. The last owner, Mavis Pratt, had made few alterations to the store since her father had fixed it up in the 1920s. She also had accumulated and kept stock and records dating back to the 1960s and some earlier. The store, its layout, accommodation quarters out the back, and its contents provide a commentary on the changing role and nature of rural general stores and of Chinese owned general stores in particular, as well as a window on the rise and decline of a tin mining community. Since its opening as a museum, the store has also attracted the donation of other items documenting the Chinese history of the locality: opium tins, decorative items and objects from the temples, mining equipment, items from the Tet Fong herbalist collection, and store paraphernalia from the other significant and long surviving general store in the town, Sam Kee.

In nearby Inverell, the Pioneer Village also has a selection of items marking the Chinese heritage of the district. At first on display on open shelving and in a corner, they have since been relocated to a more carefully arranged and secure display case. Among them are more items from the temples that were at Tingha (including a fortune stick shaker, printing blocks, and inscribed panels) and a variety of tableware and kitchen utensils.

At Tenterfield Centenary Cottage Museum, it is the German presence that is most apparent. Photographic portraits of early German settlers set in carved wooden frames hang in the hallway and on the walls of a number of the rooms, and there are domestic items (plates, hip bath) donated by the descendants of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds. There is also a silver plated platter inscribed with the name of Sing Sing and Company

– a Chinese owned store that operated in the town in the early twentieth century.



Engraved silver plated tray, Tenterfield Centenary Cottage.

The engraving reads: 'With compliments from Sing, Sing & Co, General Merchants, Tenterfield. The house that saves you money. Phone No.26. PO Box 33'.

The objects and displays in the local museums are significant. They mark the integral part that immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds have played in parts of the history of each locality. Sometimes the items have been acquired for their connection to the area rather than for their connection to the impact of non-British migration; at other times, the collection and display or, indeed, re-display of items has been done as a conscious response to the growing recognition of the different sights and different experiences of immigrants from a variety of cultural backgrounds. There are, of course, many, many gaps but the stories are appearing.



## ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS

This survey of the patterns and themes that can be traced in the histories of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds on the New England Tableland has been drawn from the research and work already done by others and supplemented by research done specifically for the project. It offers a framework for further research and writing, and it argues for the importance of pursuing different sights when seeking to understand immigrant experiences in particular localities and regions. It argues for the need to move away from the obvious and well-worn emphasis on extant buildings associated with prominent Anglo-Celtic migrants and to look as well, for both extant and disappeared sites and for material culture and intangible heritage associated with immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Throughout the period of European settlement, the number of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds – with occasional exceptions – has been relatively small and has been dwarfed by the numerical, economic, cultural and social power of the English, Scottish and Irish migrants who took over the region. Yet their perspectives highlight different aspects of the New England experience. They highlight, for example, how pastoral expansion and mining were partly dependent on immigrant labour, and how free selection translated into land ownership and farming opportunities for some immigrants. They point to the nature and development of specific farming enterprises – market gardens, orchards, vineyards, tobacco – as initiatives of non-British immigrants. They emphasise that commercial, trade and manufacturing opportunities tended to come in patterns – Germans in trades; Greeks in cafés and cinemas; Chinese in stores and restaurants – that reveal as much about the economic life and restrictions of towns as the support networks within ethnic communities. They indicate that, from early on, health care and religious instruction included practitioners from diverse cultural backgrounds and with traditions that met with ambivalence, sometimes hostility and sometimes appreciation. They raise the important issue of the place of language and cultural difference, and how changing official attitudes and policies have been played out at the local level in remote places with the experiences of schooling and tertiary education offering examples. They introduce the different mechanisms employed by immigrants to survive in their new and often alien environments, and the nature of the community networks, social lives, and local participation that evolved. And, finally, they highlight how creative endeavours as well as research, writing and exhibitions about the histories of immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds have not only helped to put their experiences overtly on the historic record but also



offer different insights and perspectives on the New England experience and living in Australia.

The challenge now is to build further on the work done by others and that represented in this thematic history.

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Theocharis (Harris) and Maroula Pavlou, Armidale, 3 November 1983 and 3 October 1988.

Clare and Karl Pieper, Tenterfield, 22 August 1984 and 26 February 1988.

Dino and Valeria Saccon, Mingoola, 16 August 1983.

Chris and Maurie Stephen, Armidale, 20 June 1983.

Agostino Tolone, Mingoola, 15 and 16 August 1983.

Theo Verbeek, Inverell, 6 October 1983 and 15 June 1985.

## Local Museum Collections

Armidale Folk Museum: objects, photographs and other historical material.

Emmaville Mining and Cultural Museum: albums, gems and minerals, objects, photographs minerals.

Guyra and District Historical Museum: objects, photographs and other historical material.

Hillgrove Rural Life and Industry Museum.

Inverell Pioneer Village: relocated buildings housing a range of farm equipment, objects, photographs, textiles including a significant selection of items relating to the Chinese presence in the locality.

Land of the Beardies History House Museum and Research Centre: archival and research collection, objects, photographs including a significant collection of items relating to the Kwong Sing store in Glen Innes.

McCrossins Mill Museum, Uralla: photographs, objects, documents including an exhibition dedicated to the Chinese on the Rocky River Goldfields.

Smith's Museum and Mineral Collection, Green Valley Farm, near Tingha: objects, minerals and other items from the district including a significant selection of items relating to the Chinese presence in Tingha.

Tenterfield Centenary Cottage Museum: archival and research collection, photographs and albums, objects including items relating to the German presence in the locality.

Walcha Pioneer Cottage and Museum: photographs, objects and machinery.

Wing Hing Long Store and Museum: state heritage listed site and archival and object collections documenting the history of the site as a Chinese owned general store. Also collections on the Sam Kee store and on Fah Sue Tet Fong, Chinese herbalist.

## Miscellaneous

Chinese in New England Project: oral history interviews (see above), research notes, field notes, photographs. To be deposited in UNE Heritage Centre and Regional Archives.

Different Sights: Immigrants in New England Project: Research notes, database printout, field notes. To be deposited in UNE Heritage Centre and Regional Archives.

First Families Project, Tenterfield Centenary Cottage Museum.

Golden Threads Project: Research notes, oral history interviews, database printout, photographs. To be deposited in UNE Heritage Centre and Regional Archives.

Immigrants in the Bush Project: field notes, oral history interviews (see above), photographs. To be deposited in UNE Heritage Centre and Regional Archives.

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